



Window on Jordan

Cool cure for summertime blues

Star Staff Writer

COOL, CREAMY, chocolate. Ah...delicious ice cream. The taste on the palate is simply electrifying. 'Go for the cornet' is our latest slogan to all you people out there. Whenever you are depressed and want to put a smile back on your face, just have an ice cream—the more the merrier. It's hard to believe, but according to British scientists those who eat ice cream tend to be much more jovial than people who don't. Indeed, they conclude after much research that people who don't eat the stuff tend to be grumpy, impatient and boring.

Although at the end of the day cynics claim that this is only a theory, there is nevertheless certainly

no harm in trying it. And if an ice cream a day makes you more happy and active, then where's the harm?

Because the scientists don't say how many ice creams it might take to do the trick, people must force themselves to experiment, and shouldn't be embarrassed how much they eat—even if the number runs to double figures. If it breaks the hold of depression, and wipes the glum contortions from their faces, it's worth it.

Some social commentators say that by nature Jordanians are a solemn, serious lot. So you never know—eating a couple of cornets, with maybe an occasional chocolate ice cream bar in between for

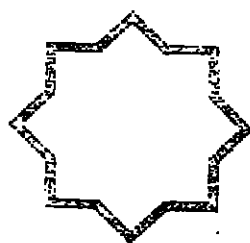
variation, and an entire box now and then for emphasis might bring color into your face, excitement to your life and even a happy tear to your eye.

Yet the happiness ice cream provides has as much to do with the ritual of buying it as eating it—you know, the fact of going down to the shops, opening up the freezer and seeing all those delicious colors, the cold odorless rise of the frozen mist in your face.

And there are so many to choose from! Yellow ones, red ones, pink, blue and brown ones. So many shapes and sizes! Oblong, squared, rounded—I even remember when they came in rocket shapes, all in

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The Star



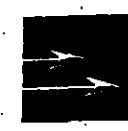
Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

● Ministre du tourisme :
«1,8 millions de touristes
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● Visite en psychiatrie

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AMMAN, 23 — 29 APRIL 1998, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 46, 350 FILS

اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Insuring an ethical media Press needs independent watchdog

By Marwan Asmar

Star Staff Writer

TIME TO take stock. In light of the proposed press and publication draft law now in process, there is increasing pressure among journalists to re-evaluate their professional status.

Spurred by concerns about tightening regulations and possible encroachment of freedoms, "putting our house in order" is now a favorite phrase among members of the press.

His Majesty King Hussein was critical of several Jordanian newspapers that attacked the Palestinian leadership in the wake of conflict between the PLO and Hamas resulting from the death of Moheidin Sharif. In his letter to Prime Minister Abdel Salam Al Majali last week, urging the government to issue a new publication law, His Majesty said, "These abuses serve only the enemies of Palestine and Jordan and the march of both peoples."

Recent statements by Information Minister Abdallah Nsour to allay the fears of the press body in relation to the upcoming draft are not doing the trick. Dr Nsour is on record as stating that the new draft, which will be presented in the Lower House during its extraordinary session this summer, will be far more transparent than the previous press draft law.

He adds that it will "contain more freedoms and not the reverse." He continues that the law gives the judiciary, rather than the government, the upper hand.

The draft law—which is, according to sources, ready—will cover the legal gaps that the previous law left open.

The new draft is providing considerable food for thought. Some experts say it would be better for the government to stick to the present law in order to safeguard democracy, as long as there is one important condition added: That the press becomes more professional and adheres to a code of ethics or a "moral charter."

While some cynics argue that this is the wrong time to discuss

ideas like these, which should have been introduced at a much earlier stage, others beg to differ. They say that because journalism is a dynamic profession, it's never too late to introduce new ideas to revitalize the press.

What is needed above all is the creation of a more congenial atmosphere. Ibrahim Izzeddin, a former Minister of Information who has served in many cabinets, says that "both the government and the press have to cooperate to build confidence between themselves and help lay traditions that will govern the profession in the coming years."

In addition to this, it is argued that the profession needs to be more assertive in regulating itself, thus the idea of a press council could be gaining wider circulation.

The idea of a press council is certainly not a novel one, as Mahmud Al Sharif, chief editor of *Al-Dustour*, says. There are 65 press councils in the world. These basically ensure the smooth running of the profession.

Former Minister of Information, Al Sharif says "there are different types of press councils but the general idea is that they act as 'clash absorbers' or 'shock absorbers'."

He goes on to say that the idea of setting up a press council in Jordan is to "regulate the behavior of the press, protect the community from the misbehavior of certain journalists, and apply a code of conduct which the print media must abide by."

Ideas of self-regulation in the past have come and gone. The first government of Abdel Salam Al Majali drew up a "moral charter" for the press back in 1993. However it proved ineffective and for all intents and purposes was shelved: the press ignored it.

"It has been proven beyond a doubt that a press charter, a press code of ethics, is not respected, people don't usually abide by it, you need a body that supervises the execution of the code of ethics and that is the press council."

Al Sharif is frank and seems to echo the voice of many in the profession. "The idea is not to let the government interfere in the conduct of the press...the press council—which is a regulatory body that represents the will of the press—oversees the regulations of the behavior of the media."

Other chief editors like Taher Al Idwan of *Al Arab Al Youm* believe that there must be a "moral reference."

But to be effective, the body must be totally independent of the government and the press. While a press council article was introduced in the draft press and publications law of 1991 that was passed in 1993—minus the press council—Izzeddin believes that a press council should be free of government ministers, parliamentarians and the judiciary.

"We need a press council that includes people who are known for their association with the press, and known for their neutrality and honesty," points out Al Idwan.

He has a similar view to that put forward by Al Sharif. "The composition of the press council can be made up of different forms, but it should generally be made up from retired jurists, of distinguished writers and thinkers, and publishers."

The aspect of independence in a press council is crucial if it is to carry out its job effectively. While some say that it should be part of the Jordan Press Association, Al Sharif disagrees. He says that when the idea was first proposed some years ago, it was rejected by both government and the press. "The Press Association thought it would diminish its authority," he said.

But he states categorically that the Press Association is unfit to carry out this mission simply because the PA is formed through elections. He points out that in the course of electioneering, these bodies aren't an effective body to harness the abuses of press freedom. ■



Daghestani pilgrims on their way back from Mecca traditionally stop over in Amman for a stay of several days to rest, enjoy the late spring weather, and hawk the rugs, honey and various bric-a-brac they bring with them to sell along the way in hopes of off-setting the costs of their hajj. Full story on page 2.

Gorbachev outlines views on world leadership

AMMAN (Star)—Former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev is currently in Jordan on a lecture tour. Mr Gorbachev was invited by the United Nations University/International Leadership Academy, whose advisory board is chaired by Her Majesty Queen Noor to give a series of lectures on leadership and global challenges in the new world order.

The former leader of the ex-Soviet Union, who now heads the Gorbachev Institute, has already given a press conference and lectures at the Institute of Diplomacy and the University of Jordan.

Gorbachev, initiator of perestroika [economic restructuring] and glasnost [openness]—both of which have had a profound worldwide effect—talked about the "idea of challenges concerning the future," something which is very much facing a world that is constantly changing.

He said that the impression he got during his lecture tours in America, Europe and Asia was that people are anxious, and are asking about the directions of the world, and where it all might lead. He emphasized that these are questions that must be studied very carefully before we are able to provide answers for them.

Gorbachev said "we are but



(From right) Queen Noor, Gorbachev, and head of the Institute of Diplomacy, Dr. Kamel Abu Jaber.

observers of a rapid comprehensive process that involves social, political and economic factors."

During a press conference, Gorbachev criticized the role of the US in current Middle East negotiations. He said that the US must allow the United Nations, as well as other countries, to have a say in the process.

He warned that the peace process is in danger. He said it is going through a critical period that involves difficult problems that both sides must work to resolve. He added that

what is currently needed is credibility based on flexibility and mutual understanding, pointing out that real peace requires a regional system that is based on security and cooperation.

On the global side, he said that it is primarily the United States which opposes a greater role for Russia in international affairs, although he did acknowledge that his country is now busy with "internal problems."

He added that he is confident that these would be solved, enabling Russia to play a greater role in international politics. ■

Israel harbors silent hope for breakthrough in London talks

By Judy Dempsey and Avi Machlis

ISRAELI PLAYED down expectations of any breakthrough in the stalled peace negotiations when Madeleine Albright, US secretary of state, holds talks in London next month. She is scheduled to meet separately Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister, and Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority.

"To raise expectations would probably be counter-productive," said David Barilant, Netanyahu's adviser.

The change in tone coincides with growing pressure from both Washington and the European Union to break the year-old impasse in the talks after Israel started building a new Jewish settlement at Har Homa in occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

Both US and EU diplomats, consulting regularly, realise time is running out for the implementation of the interim Oslo agreements which were to pave the way for a final peace settlement between Israel and the Palestinians. The five-year interim period expires on May 4 next year, exactly a year after the London meeting.

Arafat has pledged to unilaterally declare a "Palestinian state in May 1999 and the main Arab states are almost certain to back him unless there is movement on the peace process in the next two months. Netanyahu this week said: "If Arafat takes unilateral action, we will have to consider what unilateral actions we take on the territories under our jurisdiction."

West Bank territory is divided into three areas. The PA fully controls Area A, or about 3 per cent of the land. Israel has security responsibility and the PA-civilian control



Albright

over Area B, 27 per cent of the West Bank. And Israel has full control over Area C, the remaining 70 per cent.

Under the Oslo accords and the January 1997 Hebron accords, signed by the Netanyahu government, Israel was to hand over unspecified amounts of West Bank territory to the PA in three stages, to be completed by the middle of June this year. So far, no troop pull-backs have taken place. The PA rejected the first one, proposed in March 1997 on the grounds that the two per cent of land being offered by Israel was inadequate.

Albright's proposals, not yet formally presented to Israel, envisage Israel handing over 13.1 per cent of land to the PA. But Netanyahu, according to advisers, is unwilling to consider anything above nine per cent. But the Israeli prime minister could face more pressure from within his own government not to carry out any redeployments now that he is negotiating to get the far-right Mofet party into his coalition. Mofet is vehemently opposed to the Oslo accords. ■

Financial Times Syndication

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Who will settle the check?

By Samir Raafat

IN MID-MARCH I accompanied a 21-member delegation of international Cairo-based journalists into the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We visited in turn Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank. During our three-day tour we met Yasser Arafat, Suh Eriqat, Nabil Shaat, Feisal Hussein as well as a host of mayors presiding over 'bantustans'—a term used by Nabil Shaat to describe the West Bank self-rule regions. These are a motley of towns and villages sandwiched between Israeli settlements.

This was my second visit to Israel, the first having taken place in November 1994 when I was invited by Tel Aviv University's Kaplan Chair to lecture on my book dealing with the Cairo suburb of Maadi, home to many Jews between 1910 and 1963.

The treatment at border control this time around was noticeably different. Whereas the first time I was received like visiting royalty, this time it was a polemical drill in security.

None of our co-ed Uzi-toting interlocutors at either Rafah or Eilat looked over 34, which perhaps accounts for their youthful arrogance. To the soldiers' credit however, they treated us with the same icy indifference irrespective of our individual nationalities. It didn't matter to them if one was 26 or 75. Nor did the weather matter, for at the Erez checkpoint (between Gaza and Israel) we were left out in torrential rain while two macho Israeli soldiers checked our passports and luggage.

It didn't take much traveling around by bus in Gaza or the West Bank to realize the short distances that separate the different population centers. And while Palestinians and Israelis live in close proximity to one another, their rela-

tions are anything but neighborly. The city of Jerusalem best exemplifies the explosive situation.

Yet it was over dinner at East Jerusalem's historical American Colony Hotel that I came face to face with the psychological and historical chasm that separates the warring neighbors.

Upon hearing I was in Jerusalem, David, a former Israeli diplomat in Cairo, now serving in his country's ministry of foreign affairs, dropped by at the hotel. I had met David when he lived in Maadi, the favored place of residence for Israeli diplomats serving in Cairo. Because of the raging snowstorm, I suggested we have dinner in the hotel. I had been told the American Colony had some of the best fare in town.

Just as we were about to order we were joined by Dikane, the tall brunette correspondent for a London-based Arabic-language daily, who was traveling with our press group. She sat down thinking the blond blue-eyed David was a West-

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In the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis

Love and revenge in rural setting

By Marwan Asmar
Star Staff Writer

HAVE YOU ever picked up a book you felt compelled to finish in a single sitting? The other day that's exactly what happened to me. Ali Al Tal's epic novel (*Shirah of Lovers*, London, Minerva Press, 1977, pp. 722), set in Irbid in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis, is an epic of immense proportions.

The author, a Jordanian who lives in the United Kingdom, very cleverly weaves together the lives of many characters from the Sheikh Khalil quarter of that city.

The reader is taken into a labyrinth of lives, of different attitudes and at times outrageous behavior.

The hook, which is a major contribution to the Jordanian novel in the English language, centers on the Abu Abdo family, but threads together different characters and shows through the narrative their prejudices and fears, superstitions and hopes as they interact with one another.

In a rich manner, the writer very vividly describes a peasantry-turned urban society, the abject poverty that has set in, and the hardship and monotony of making ends meet. But it was also a dynamic society affected by political, economic and social changes. The loss of Palestine and the creation of refugees—some of whom settled in Irbid—is another dimension that adds to the diversity of the novel.

Al Tal's style of prose is different from a lot of the novelists writing in the '90s. He concentrates less on dialogue and more on story telling.

The transformation of the community is described in terms of the persistence of tradition placed upon changing human relations—the issue of paternalism, the notion of the tribe, and the almost contradictory nature of a society that is

on the verge of tipping into the age of modernity.

In the story, the patriarch was very much in control. Not only was he responsible for the welfare of the household, but his word was supreme.

Despite this, the inevitable flaws did materialize in other ways. His wife and teenage daughters, as well as his married son who was in college at the time had their own way of getting their points across.

Frustrated by the mundane routines of her daily life, his wife created a secretive existence of her own by having as many affairs as she could get away with over the 20-year period they were married. These were off-chance meetings, one time, and happened mostly during the harvest.

In addition to that his daughters, who were at school—something which was contrary to tradition at the time the author points out—tried to exert their independence by engaging in public activity that would have been inappropriate at the time.

This is brought out when one of the daughters joins a march against the British-French-Israeli alliance. The father finds out and gives his daughter a good thrashing. The mother, who tries to protect her, also gets a beating. This is just one of many scenes in which the author tries to show the despotic nature of the father which he exercises over his family.

But on reading the book, one gets the feeling that there is a more pertinent reason for the behavior of the father, Abu Abdo. The role of the tribe is also a powerful force that governs every aspect of social relations. His low social status was reflected in his position of the tribe. Hence he very much respected his social ranking, and looked up to the tribal sheikh almost in veneration.

This led him to overlook and even to

ignore the plight of his closest kin: Zen, one of his oldest daughters. He marries her off to the son of the tribal chief where she lives a harrowing life for the next seven years. The husband turns out to be a sadist, and from the wedding night she is subjected to beatings and humiliation, all for his own sexual gratification.

What is disturbing, as the author graphically points out, is that neither her family nor her in-laws attempt to do anything about her plight, all because of tribal honor. Her husband's father, for instance, simply bribes Zen to keep quiet and avoid a scandal in the obviously conservative society.

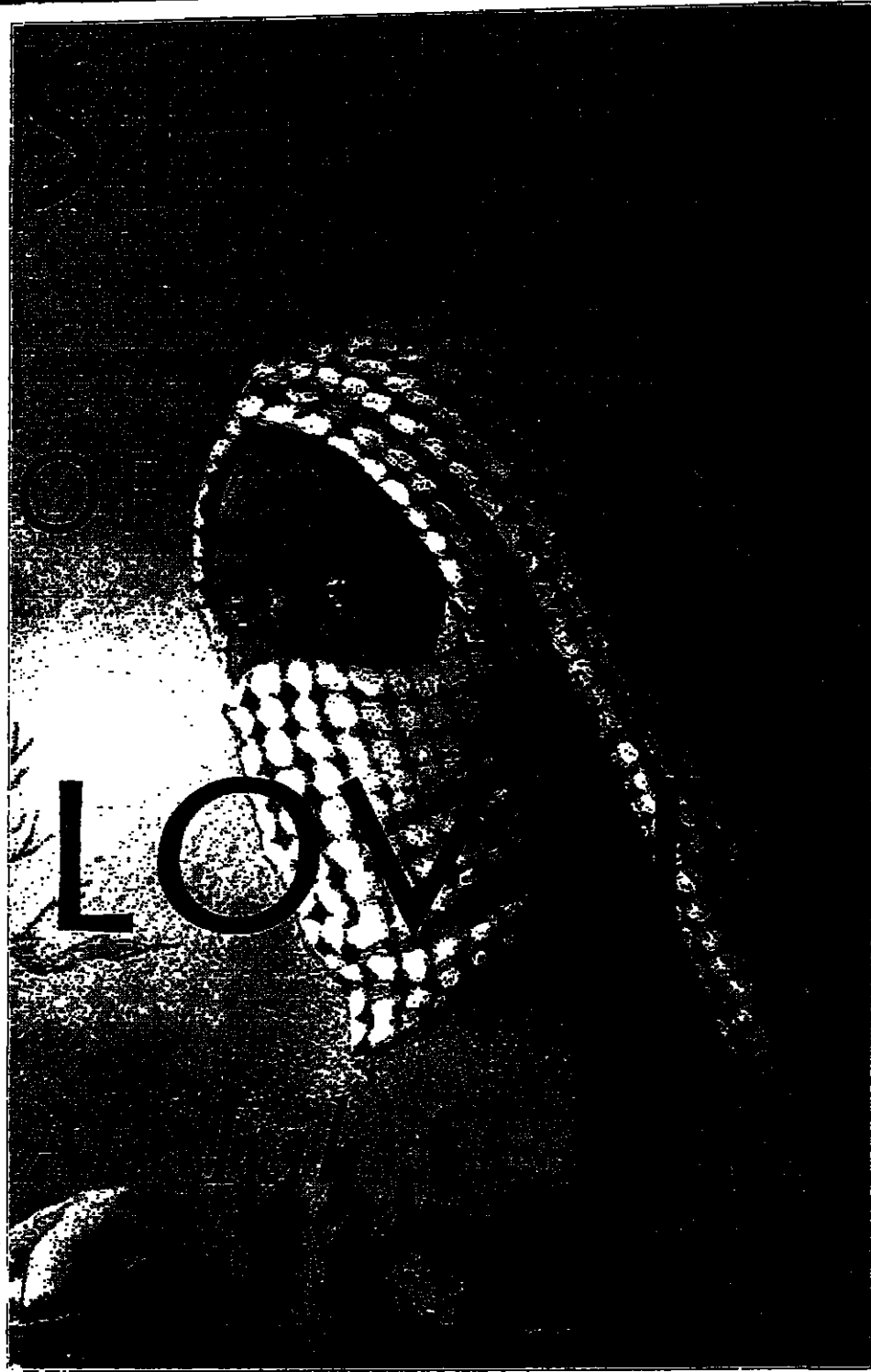
But the book is very much about breaking the rules, moving out of an almost claustrophobic atmosphere, of revenge of the very worst kind. It was revenge against the status quo, perpetuated by dogmatic social attitudes and oppressive social mores.

And in this respect the novel is really a series of anti-climaxes, written in a way that is designed to grab and infuriate the reader. Zen, tired of her existence as a lost soul, feels abandoned and decides that her only salvation lies in committing the ultimate: burn her husband.

This is one of the strongest points of the book. Although terrified by her husband, she burns him alive by setting his bed on fire.

Al Tal doesn't kill the character off but leaves him to suffer.

However, readers will have to continue to the end for the finale. In typically unique style, the author excels himself. It is now Um Abdo's turn to take revenge on the system and her husband who she hated for his chauvinism. She openly commits the ultimate sin, and pays dearly for it. ■



For the Record

Kings replies to JPA president

Amman. (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein said the democratic process in Jordan should be preserved and protected against attempts by the JPA who try to abuse it under the banner of democracy. In a reply letter to the President and members of the Jordanian Press Association (JPA), the King said that the proposed draft laws he instructed the government to work out were meant to stop those who have bad intentions against the country, its unity, democratic process and its achievements or its relations with other countries. The King reiterated Jordan's unwavering support to the Palestinian people and their elected leadership. In his letter, which came in reply to one sent by JPA President Sunday, the King expressed appreciation of the journalists committed to the truth and the national interests of the country.

King meets Cohen

Amman. (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, received Saturday US Secretary of Defense William Cohen in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan. The US secretary listened to a briefing by senior army officers on the Jordanian armed forces role in defending the country and protecting its achievements and its contribution to the development process in the Kingdom. He was also briefed on Jordan's concept regarding regional security and arms control. Jordan is looking forward to having a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and has signed all agreements and treaties related to the prevention of the possession of them. For his part, the Secretary Cohen, who is visiting Jordan in the course of a regional tour, commended the Jordanian armed forces' role in promoting security and stability in the region, noting its significant contribution to international peace keeping forces. He stressed his country's understanding of Jordan's military needs and that the US was determined to meet the Kingdom's requirements to modernize its armed forces and develop its capabilities.

French Tourism Minister in Amman

Amman. (Petra)—French Tourism Minister Michelle Dimissine, a delegate in Amman heading a delegation representing the public and the private tourism sector on a four-day visit to Jordan upon an invitation by Tourism Minister Aqel Beltaji. During her visit the French Minister will meet their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor and Prime Minister Adul Salam Majali and held talks with senior officials on tourism cooperation between Jordan and France. The Tourism Ministry has prepared a special program for Dimissine to visit tourism projects carried out in the Kingdom in cooperation with the French government.

Cool cure for summertime blues

Continued from page 1

psychic colors.

And the taste?

It is magic. A small lick and a tiny bite are heaven: thrusting your tongue into the cold and tasty mass is even better! And the hotter the weather, the more intense the pleasure.

So, armed with science's latest statistics, you can probably should indulge in the passions of ice cream eating the whole year round. This could mean a real change in ice cream parlor demographics.

Going to the shops for ice cream—previously the exclusive business of the young—is likely to become a habitual activity for all age groups. And remember, if you feel the least embarrassed going out for a lolly, just tell yourself you're only doing it for your health. And take a look around at all the others there, for the same reason. And have a smile. ■

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JORDAN

Daghestanis sell their goods as they go Nomadic merchants

By Star Staff Writer

EVERY YEAR during the pilgrimage season a group of Daghestanis flock to the Kingdom carrying with them a wide variety of goods to sell as they make their way slowly to and from Mecca. Daghestan is a Muslim republic in the south of the former Soviet Union.

Mohammad Rasoul Al Daghestani told *The Star* "We bring with us many things—from pure honey and carpets to cameras, glass pots, and souvenirs." He pointed out that during their trip, Daghestani pilgrims have to pay entrance and exit fees at the borders of every country they travel through. So the idea behind bringing along merchandise to sell is that money from sales will offset the costs of their trip.

When I visited their encampment—they stay at the same place in Amman every year, in the empty lot near Abela and Jordan Hospital—a number of Daghestani pilgrims (mostly women) were sitting quietly on the ground near displays of their goods. Business seemed to be a little slack.

The real hub of activity was around the containers of

honey, a Daghestani specialty item. Small plastic bottles of the amber stuff were being sold at JD 5—a little steep for many prospective buyers.

"But smart shoppers were able to find better deals. Another vendor was offering honey at about half of the going rate. A large glass pot weighing 4 1/2 kilos could be had from this fellow for a mere JD 12. Asked if he guaranteed it to be the purest honey, the vendor, naturally, answered yes while another customer chimed in that he had already tested it, noting that he was there to buy more.

Dealing with Daghestani vendors was no easy matter. Most of them don't speak Arabic or English. Some carried calculators on which they punched in numbers in answer to clients' queries about price. Others, who seemed to prefer not dealing with people at all, answered questions by simply putting up the appropriate number of fingers.

Most vendors seemed happy simply standing by their vehicles, showing samples of their wares, apparently satisfied to do nothing but silently wait for customers. Others relaxed inside the

buses in and among the piles of goods they'd brought with them.

The number of parked cars along the side of the road gave the misleading impression that the place was swarming with customers, but as it turned out, many of them were curious passers-by who only wanted to see what was going on, and didn't seem anxious to open their purses.

Generally speaking, the prices were on the high side. For example, a medium-sized mattress ran upwards of \$150-\$200. Nevertheless, there were incredible good deals for those who had the time to seek them out.

Mohammad Al Jalad, 15 years old, told *The Star*, "I bought 15 small carpets last year from the Daghestanis and I managed to resell some of them for \$200." He got the whole lot for only \$150, so he came away with a decent profit, and a sense of himself as a smart businessman.

This year he came to the site hoping to get rid of the remaining carpets. "I am sure that I can sell each for \$200 or \$250 at least—and people seem to be buying." ■

King warns of impending danger in peace stalemate

AMMAN. (Star)—His Majesty King Hussein has warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the Middle East region could plunge into destructive darkness unless peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians achieve progress. Deputy Prime Minister and Information Minister Abdallah Nsour said Monday.

Speaking to reporters during the regular Monday press briefing, Nsour said the King sent a letter to Netanyahu last Friday expressing his regret and fear over the stalled peace process as a result of his hardline policies.

"His Majesty King Hussein appealed to the Israeli prime minister in the strongest, clearest and most emphatic words that the failure of the peace process would not only endanger this side or that, but the whole area," said Deputy Prime Minister Abdallah Nsour.

Nsour said King Hussein's assessment was in a letter sent to Netanyahu last Friday, a day after the two leaders met in Elit to discuss the stalled Israeli-Arab peace process.

Netanyahu mentioned the King's letter to Israeli ministers during a cabinet meeting earlier this week and told them it was friendly and to the point. He said it did not contain the misgivings reported in the Israeli press.

The King, who signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, has become increasingly frustrated with the stalemate in Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations.

The talks broke off in March last year, when Israel began constructing a Jewish housing project in the Jabal Abu Ghinaim Arab neighborhood of east Jerusalem.

On Sunday, the King told reporters that he sensed from the meeting with Netanyahu on Thursday that "there is a serious Israeli drive aimed at moving the peace process and bringing life to it again." He added "I can't say that the results were positive, as we did not discuss details" of Israel's peace plans.

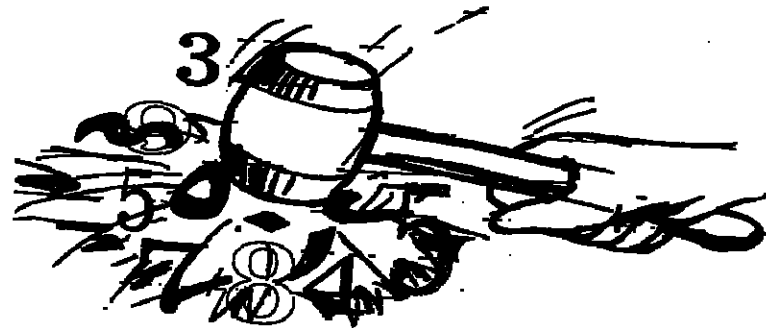
"The moment is historic, and those who will leave this process—for any reason—move in the path of demise," the King said. ■

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W E E K



An unconventional report on Jordanian news and views edited by Marwan Al Asmar

Prince Hassan's award for academic excellence

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said the kingdom's reform program and development should be based on earnest efforts by all sectors of the society. Addressing a special ceremony to award the Prince Al Hassan Bin Talal Award for Academic Excellence, Prince Hassan reiterated a call for the establishment of a national database center to connect over 550 institutions in the kingdom. Two of Jordan's major institutions, the Vocational Training Corporation, and the Ministry of Education won the second and the third category of the award respectively.

The Crown Prince said Jordan needs to organize its broad base of qualified men and creative potential. He stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation and coordination between the countries of the region extending from Morocco to Turkey to ensure the most beneficial development and use of its potentials and resources.

The first category of the Award was not given to any institution since none of the projects presented met the standards set for this category. The Award was established in 1995 for the encouragement of academic, scientific and technological activities and achievements in institutions involved in education and training. During the ceremony, which was attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, who chairs the Award's Committee, Prince Hassan affirmed Jordan's keenness to develop its relations with other Arab countries on the basis that serve their joint interests and objectives.

Scent

Like any other people, Jordanians, it seems, are highly appreciative of fragrances and perfumes. In 1997, they spent JD 20 million on different kinds of perfumes. Raed Abu Shaqra of the Shaqra Trading Agency says that this is a high figure if you take into account the size of Jordan's population. Jordan ranks eighth in the Arab World in terms of expenditure on perfumes, the first being Saudi Arabia. Perfume use by the Saudis constitutes half of the total consumption of the Arab world. While we don't spend that much on perfumes—about JD 6 million—nevertheless, there are three factories in Jordan that are internationally licensed to produce 200 kinds of fragrance at a price that ranges between JD 3 and JD 10 for a small bottle. The most expensive perfume in Jordan comes in at a whopping JD 25.

Locusts

It is summer time and the locusts are coming. This is the usual fear we hear about year after year. Of course, they never do come to our part of the world. This year it is no different. Officials in the Ministry of Agriculture have recently stressed that there is no danger of an invasion in Jordan of the desert locusts which have invaded the western beaches of the Arabian peninsula and eastern fronts of Egypt in February.

Shooting for fun

The shooting season is about to begin. It is a time when shooting for fun takes place. It is not during wedding parties, shootings in the desert, or out of distress and heartache. It is a time when people are entertained. This year it is no different. This is also the reason why the Governor of the West Bank, Salim Al Rowaihi met the elders of the Bedouin tribes to sign a "code of conduct." This would mean that the people of the area wouldn't indulge in shooting during marriage ceremonies or at any other time.

Prisoner in Israel

A Jordanian citizen serving an eight-year sentence in an Israeli prison made a plea to the Israeli High Court concerning visiting rights. He said that the Israeli embassy in Amman wouldn't allow his family members to visit him in prison. According to Al Jazeera, the International Red Cross has been unable to help his family to get into Israel because it can't deal with the problems of prisoners if there is a peace treaty between a prisoner's home country and that in which he is detained. Mohammad Salim was taken into custody two years ago while he was in Israel. In the plea, he wrote that "my family, wife and child want to visit me in prison, but they are refused." He said that a woman he knows visited him in prison and told him that the Israeli Embassy had refused to give his family visas to visit him. A source at the Israeli Foreign Ministry said that the decision to allow families to visit from outside Israel is also dependent on Israeli security authorities and their Ministry of Interior. He added that "the Foreign Ministry at this time has no applications presented by the prisoner's family to the Israeli Embassy."

Workers

A delegation representing the General Union of Electrical Workers (GUEW) left for Baghdad earlier this week. It is participating in the international Arab workers festival which is being organized by the General Union of Iraqi Workers and the International Federation for Arab Workers Unions. The aim of the festival is to show support for the removal of the UN sanctions on Iraq. The head of the GUEW said that the reason for going to Iraq is to express solidarity with the Arab workers movement and stand with the Iraqi people.

RJ on the move

The number of passengers flown by Royal Jordanian in the first three months of this year has shown a considerable increase. They registered 248,878—more than 58 percent of the seating capacity. It also carried more than 16,115 tons of cargo during this period. On another level, and as part of its keenness to provide comfort for its passengers, RJ will begin operating a weekly flight every Wednesday between Amman and New York for non-smokers as of 1 May. The plane currently operates five weekly flights between Amman and New York and two flights between Amman and Chicago.

Jordanian-Tunisian Committee meets

The Preparatory Committee of the Higher Jordanian-Tunisian Joint Committee concluded its meetings in Tunis. The meetings, which were held during April 19-20, were co-chaired by Minister of Industry Dr Hani Malki and his Tunisian counterpart Al Manthar Alzauidi. The Tunisian minister in a speech welcoming the Jordanian delegation stressed the strong ties between Jordan and Tunisia which have developed in trade and economic fields. Malki noted the strong brotherly ties between Jordan and Tunisia, affirming the importance of further developing them for the common good of both countries.

The two sides reviewed issues of cooperation in the economic, trade and agricultural fields. It also discussed cooperation in other fields, including the environment, transport, tourism, culture, education, youth and sports, security, local and administrative development, health and media.



King Hussein and Prime Minister Blair during press conference

Blair in Amman

AMMAN (Star)—British Prime Minister Tony Blair during his short visit to Jordan. Sunday, He was received by His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, and Prime Minister Dr Abdel Salam Al Majali. At a joint press conference King Hussein said His Majesty expressed hope that "the current visit of Mr Blair to the area at this very critical time will help us move ahead in the peace process." His Majesty welcomed the British Prime Minister, who represents Europe, noting that Europe is an example in the Arab world of what is possible to achieve. "I hope that we can take many lessons...and after all, what we are committed to is a better future for our peoples, a future of stability, progress and democracy that is worthy of all of us," His Majesty said.

Prime Minister Blair said that Britain will do all it can to make progress in the Middle East peace process, affirming the importance of this, not just for the people of the region, but for the stability of the world. "It was an honour and privilege to have discussions with His Majesty King Hussein—someone who has earned respect throughout the world for his dignity and courage," he said. Blair stressed the strong relations between Jordan and Britain and noted the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to deepen and strengthen their relations in the various fields over the coming period.

Prince Hassan and Mr Blair made a tour of the Baqa'a Camp. The tour aimed to highlight the hard living conditions and the plight of refugees and to reaffirm the need for a just solution to the refugee issue in a way that guarantees the refugees' right of return or their right to compensation based on the relevant UN resolutions.

Later in the day Blair, who was accompanied by his wife, was seen off by Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor at the airport. Blair, who left for Israel, the fourth leg of his tour, is visiting the region in a bid to revive efforts to push the peace process forward. He has already visited Egypt and Saudi Arabia.



Prince Hassan and Blair at the house of one of the citizens in the Baqa'a Camp



50 years of broadcasting

Opening the airwaves signals more healthy competition

By Chassan John
Special to The Star

OVER THE past 40 years, Radio Jordan captured the heart and minds of people in this country. In addition to political and social interests, the station has also developed its own educational and entertainment programs. However, because of the number of worthy concerns, the audio-visual media—radio and TV—must today deal with a variety of issues if they are to maintain their popularity with the public.

"Nowadays many factors are ruling public attitudes," Hashim Khreisat, director-general of Radio Jordan, told The Star. "The corporation [Radio and Television Corp] is relying on a dynamic, interactive and flexible policy to serve its listeners both here and abroad." This year Radio Jordan celebrates its 50th year of broadcasting, something that goes back to its beginnings in Jerusalem in 1948 under British rule; it later resumed as a national voice in Amman in March of 1959.

But their long domination of the airwaves hasn't prevented them from sharing a portion of it with others. Recently—and within months of each other—three foreign radio stations started broadcasting on the local FM frequency. First it was the MBC, then Radio Monte Carlo and finally, the BBC Arabic Service. "At this stage, we prefer to permit their transmission inside Jordan in order to observe and judge the public response to them," said Khreisat.

You can call it fair competition, though the introduction of new media sources may urge listeners to ask for more. "No one can deny the indispensable role Radio Jordan plays on the local scene, especially in terms of the information they provide," noted

Khalid Attallah, professor of literature at one of the community colleges. "But we must find out why these stations [foreign] are proliferating in the Arab World. This can't be achieved unless we are all ears."

Samira Muhsen, 21, is one of the many who is excited by the fact the Radio Monte Carlo now broadcasts from Amman. "It is about freedom of expression without frontiers," said Samira.

She insisted that no other station can beat Radio Monte Carlo. Although the Arabic-language French-owned station is a public one, it doesn't speak for a particular nation as is the case with the BBC and MBC.

"It's true these stations are serving millions of Arab listeners today, but each individual country must necessarily maintain its own point of view," Attallah added. "These views can't be influential without an effective media to clearly present them."

"Any national radio station must reflect the political and social direction of its leadership," Khreisat said, noting that providing a forum for exchanges of views is an essential element in this. Despite the fact that freedom of expression is usually thought to be a democratic prin-



Khreisat

ciple, the majority of the Arab world doesn't usually deal with or even get a chance to exercise this freedom directly through their own media.

"The leadership in Jordan agrees that freedom of expression should exist. In a democratic system you can spell out your opinion since it isn't the 'last word,' and those who disagree with you will also be allowed to have their say," Khreisat affirmed. Speaking of spelling out, Radio Monte Carlo last year founded a new 10-minute daily "Morning Corner" which gives its listeners the opportunity to discuss an array of issues ranging from politics to the environment. Now, you can't listen to RMC during the morning without hearing a veritable barrage of differing opinions.

And Radio Jordan seems to be listening. Starting this month, a new selection of programs is steadily proceeding and seems promising. "We decided this year to concentrate our attention on the upcoming generation, based on their own attitudes and demands," Khreisat said. He explained that the three-month period will mark the beginning of programming that deals with literature, national

history and, of course, remains entertaining. "On track to keep these younger listeners' attention and to show our deep interest on their views, we decided to introduce programs that were at once informative and paralleled their interests."

Khreisat assured that each presenter and commentator will go through intensive practice, even taking courses to gain the skills necessary for the station's new purpose. "Modernism doesn't mean just using technology or changing attitudes. It means learning how to speak to the people out there," Elias Salameh, a freshman studying in the West Bank, told The Star.

He made a comparison between Radio Jordan and "The Voice of Love and Peace," a Palestinian-based radio station also transmitting on the FM band. "There you can call the host by telephone and talk to him casually. Radio Jordan, on the other hand, is much more formal with respect to callers."

However, Salameh doesn't deny that the considerable difference between the two stations in some respects favors Radio Jordan. "Apart from culture and social affairs, Radio Jordan is overwhelming, especially in politics and sports," he said.

Back home, Radio Jordan is awaiting privatization. "Turning to the private sector is a must, and detailed legislation and complex procedures are needed to control the process accurately and with fairness," Khreisat said. He stated that privatization is a delicate issue requiring awareness and a general acknowledgment of prospective problems. "You can't simply convert a whole corporation by such a process without also realizing and ensuring the rights of the people." ■

Continued from page 1

emer staying at the hotel. If David thought Djehane was an attractive Sabra of Oriental Jewish stock, he didn't say. But the thought could easily have crossed his mind.

To avoid what I thought might turn into an embarrassing situation, I spelled out during the introductions exactly who did what. Both my dinner partners belonged to the urbane, trendy, yuppie-thirty-something generation. They were well-mannered and articulate. Under any other circumstances they could have started a fast friendship.

After formal greetings were exchanged, by tacit understanding we all agreed to disagree.

David learned that Djehane was Palestinian-born. She belonged to one of the oldest Jerusalemite and Jaffa families, right up there with the Husseinis, Khaldis, Nashashibis and Faroukis whose continued and uninterrupted presence in Palestine goes back a millennium and more. In fact, early this century, the beautiful American Colony Hotel had belonged to one of Djehane's ancestors.

before he sold it to missionaries from the United States.

Djehane's parents had originally lived in what in 1948 became West Jerusalem, but were forced to flee during the war that followed the creation of the State of Israel. A "transfer" system over which they had no control had begun—a polite term for ethnic cleansing. Arabs were no longer welcome in their own land, and Djehane's parents were among the first victims.

And there are the Palestinian rejects now living in accursed Lebanese refugee camps such as Sabra, Shatila and Fom al-Shehab.

Like David, Djehane knew the meaning of Diaspora. Amman and Cairo became Djehane's adopted homes. Following the 1967 war, it was impossible to return to East Jerusalem, especially since her father had been a PLO diplomat representing the little which had remained of the dis-

puted land.

It was only after Jordan signed a Peace Treaty with Israel in 1994 that Djehane was allowed to return. But only as a tourist. Like other Palestinians in the Diaspora, she has to undergo the Third Degree whenever she shows up at Israeli ports of entry: "Do you know or have any relations in Israel (meaning Israel and the Occupied Territories)? Did you bring them gifts? Did anyone pick your bag for you? How long do you plan to visit? Where will you travel when inside Israel?"

Did Djehane believe that Israeli-born David had a right to be in Palestine? Silence.

It was during his military service that David met his wife. Both are still on reserve. With two young sons to raise, both want to live in peace. A peace undisturbed by Hamas bombs or Jewish settler violence.

While serving as a diplomat in Egypt, the first Arab country to sign a Peace Treaty with Israel—almost 20 years ago, David, a straightforward and hearty person, did his best to promote bilateral relations. It wasn't easy. A few months after his arrival in Cairo, the first Hamas bus bomb went off in downtown Tel Aviv killing civilian commuters. This was followed by Yitzhak Rabin's assassination by a Jewish extremist, a second spate of bus bombings and the subsequent fall of the Labor government.

The arrival of the Likud-led coalition, the trashing of the Oslo accords and the virtual breakdown of peace talks between Arafat and Netanyahu adversely affected relations between Egypt and Israel. The MENA economic conference in which David and others of his calling had worked on relentlessly was falling apart. In Cairo, less and less people were returning his calls. Invitations

from his Egyptian counterparts dried up. Soon enough, a city of 15 million had become a lonely place. It was a disillusion. Did David believe in Djehane's right of return to "Israel"? Silence.

The conversation got nowhere. The only item we all seemed to agree upon was the good food and the unpredictable weather. It was still snowing outside when we ordered dessert. In the background we could hear church bells and from far away the call to prayer by a muezzin.

And then the check came. Suddenly, as though by magic, we were all Middle-Easterners through and through. Genetics had given way to instinct and a sense of hospitality prevailed for a brief moment. In typical oriental fashion everyone insisted on paying for the others. None of that separate check business common to the West.

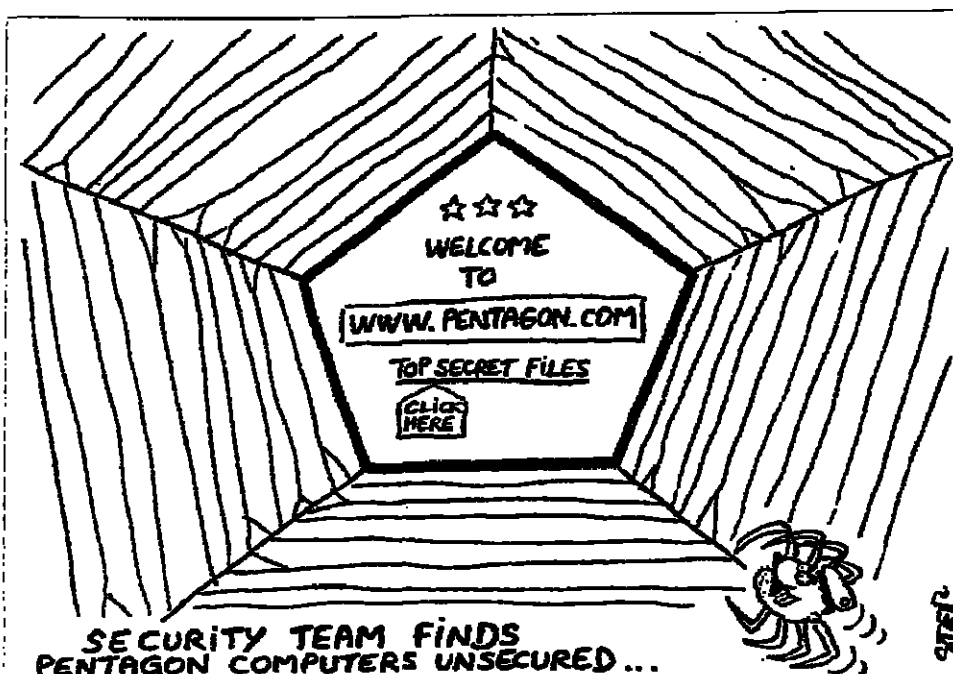
But even this collective out-

burst of cordiality was too good to last. David, spurred on by spontaneity, insisted that because we were in his country ("intu fi baladi"), we were therefore his guests.

"East Jerusalem is not part of Israel, yet!" interjected a frantic Djehane. The magic of the moment vanished. The brief flash of good spirits had been dampened. A distraught Djehane felt that it was we who were both visitors to her birth-city and guests in her ancestral home. Meanwhile, David, who had acted out of sheer spontaneity, believed—like all Israelis—that Greater Jerusalem was his capital irrespective of UN resolutions and world proclamations to the contrary.

Each paid for himself. I realized the true nature of the chasm when David later explained to me that, as an adult, this was the first time he had ever socialized with a Palestinian away from the negotiating table.

And they have been neighbors all these years. ■



Our Say...

A new press law

THE ROYAL Directive asking the government to prepare a new draft press and publication law to be presented to Parliament at the first possible opportunity has been expected ever since the High Court rejected the temporary press law a few months ago. But it is too early to prejudge the government and its intentions. One hopes that the executive will work closely with the press body before submitting the draft to the people's deputies.

The defunct temporary press law gained notoriety not only because of the draconian measures it introduced, reversing a number of crucial achievements for the Jordanian press, but also because it was enacted in the absence of Parliament and without prior consultations with the official press body, the Jordan Press Association.

To begin with, we must recognize the fact that no piece of legislation concerning the press will ever receive a unanimous vote of approval from various sectors of society. Even the present law enacted in 1993 has its critics although it is still considered among the most liberal in the Arab world.

To read through the Royal Directive and His Majesty's letter to the President and members of the Jordan Press Association, one finds specific issues that require the attention of those who will have the responsibility of drafting the law. Among these are the issues of safeguarding national unity, protecting Jordan's national interests, especially with regard to its relations with its Arab neighbors, and maintaining the ethical standards of the journalistic profession. All of these perfectly legitimate concerns must be met without infringing on press freedom and the right of Jordanians to express themselves within the law and their Constitutional rights.

This is not an easy challenge for any legislator. The government should not take this matter lightly. To enact a system of checks and balances that guarantees a free press while balancing this freedom against responsibility is not an easy task. It requires the undivided attention of seasoned journalists, publishers, jurists and legislators.

The experience of the past year should be fresh in the mind of this government as its members embark once again to amend the current law. We hope measures will be taken to involve members of the press body in addressing the areas which the King has pointed out. This should not be an open invitation to reverse the legitimate gains of Jordanian journalists, the majority of whom are responsible and professional.

The press law cannot be separated from the public liberties legislative package which defines democracy in any society. The task ahead cannot succeed if it is not marked by democratic dialogue and the open exchange of ideas.

The Royal Directive has charted a path for the government with clear objectives. All of these objectives seek to protect Jordanian democracy from those who claim to protect it. Let's not execute Jordan's press and democracy in their names. ■



A Palestinian plane lands in Baghdad, Tuesday, carrying four tons of humanitarian aid to the people of Iraq. This is the first time that a Palestinian plane lands in Iraq from the Egyptian Al Arish Airport. The aid was from the Palestine National Authority.

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GCC-Iran security cooperation:

The ins and outs of regional trust

By Christian Doumit

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS in the Gulf have opened up the possibility of security co-operation between the GCC states and Iran. On the Iranian side, the motivations behind such co-operation are clear: to undermine US influence in the region, further weaken the US policy of "dual containment", and strengthen Tehran's geopolitical position vis-à-vis Iraq.

But despite the slow yet steady signs of improving Iran-US relations, Washington would view the possibility of GCC-Iran security co-operation in a very negative light. Developments in the past few months, which point to an improvement in GCC-Iran ties include a 10-day visit to Saudi Arabia on 24 March by former Iranian president Rafsanjani, who continues to play an important role in Iran.

This was followed by a visit to Bahrain on 4 March. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are the two GCC countries with whom Tehran has had strained relations since the early 1980s, apart from the UAE, with which Iran has a territorial dispute. Next, in a move unprecedented since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the Iranian warship "Kheibar," carrying a group of students and professors from the Navy and from the elite Revolutionary Guards Corps, visited the port of Jeddah on 7 March.

The warship was greeted by Saudi military officials and on the following day, President Khatami, in a meeting with Iranian diplomats based in the

GCC decided to set up committees to find ways of boosting relations with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula.

While Iran's motivations for regional security co-operation have been clear since the 1990s, it is the GCC which has begun to take a nuanced position in favor of Iran over the past year. This subtle change is due to four basic reasons:

First, GCC leaders are beginning to accept the possibility that President Saddam Hussein may outlast the UN sanctions. If that happens, the countries which relied on the US to get rid of the Iraqi leader would feel safer with Tehran as a friend rather than an enemy.

Second, Iran under President Khatami appears less threatening and has shown greater willingness to co-exist peacefully. Although the GCC members will continue to harbor varying degrees of suspicion about Iranian ambitions in the region, there is a perception among top officials that Khatami is genuine and wants a positive change in relations.

In an interview with the *Financial Times* on 3 March, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal said Tehran had used the Islamic Conference Organization summit last December to "give the world a message—not one of shadows but one of substance—that they want to improve relations."

Third, with the near collapse of the Arab-Israeli peace process and the inability of

the US to convince Premier Netanyahu to implement agreements, GCC rulers are beginning to see close relations with US as a liability. In light of this, they are now stepping back from identifying themselves too closely with American policy, for example by linking up with Iran or by denying US forces, the use of their territories to hit Iraq, as in the latest standoff between Washington and Baghdad.

Fourth, the Turkish-Israeli strategic alliance, which is backed by the US, is a source of concern for virtually all the Arab countries as well as Iran. Both Saudi Arabia and Iran share concerns that this alliance could extend its strategic reach to the Gulf. There are even suspicions that Washington wants Turkey and Israel to have a future role in insuring Gulf security as regional policemen. This is something which Iran and the GCC states are almost certain to oppose, regardless of progress in the Middle East peace process.

While GCC-Iran co-operation on security matters may be perceived as a threat to US strategic and commercial dominance in the Arabian Peninsula, some quarters in Washington suspect that limited defence links between Iran and Saudi Arabia—two countries that have viewed each other as enemies for nearly two decades—could be the first step in calls for US forces to be pulled out of the region.

Such suspicions are unfounded that no GCC member state is likely to make this type of demand in the foreseeable future. While the GCC rulers may be willing to explore the possibility of regional security co-operation with Tehran, they are not naive, i.e. they would not turn their back on US protection and depend on security links with Tehran at a time when they cannot even agree on an integrated defense policy.

After years of discussing co-ordination on strategic issues, it is only at the Kuwait summit in December 1997 that they agreed to set up a regional advisory council. It remains to be seen how effective the council will be. It is far more likely that the GCC leaders see limited security co-operation with Iran as one more positive element in their overall strategic perspective.

A more subtle point in the background is that the Gulf countries may see improving relations with Iran as an opportunity to forestall domestic instability—at a time when oil prices have dropped to their lowest point in nearly a decade and economic austerity measures may become unavoidable in the coming years.

Iran has been calling for regional security arrangements ever since the 1991 Gulf war. The GCC states, not in a mood at that time to trust either Iraq or Iran, remained cold toward this idea. But in recent years, Iran has been applying careful diplomacy aimed at improving the atmosphere in relations with the GCC states. While such efforts remain marred by the territorial dispute with the UAE and allegations by Bahrain that Iran was supporting Islamic activists in the emirate, the general trend has been positive and was even enhanced after Khatami was elected president in May 1997.

This does not mean that changes in Iran-GCC relations are imminent or will be dramatic. GCC members hold different attitudes towards Iran. Qatar and Oman have kept cordial ties with Iran throughout much of the past decades. On the other hand Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain were openly opposed to Iran during the regime of the late Ayatollah Khomeini and during Rafsanjani's first term in the early 1990s. The UAE is in a unique position: among its seven emirates, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah dispute the ownership of Abu Musa and the Tumb islands, while Dubai is a major trading partner with Iran and the source of a large percentage of its imports. ■

Christian Doumit is an energy consultant based in Amman.



Ships during last Gulf War: The Gulf continues to be volatile area

Excellence and performance

Work attitudes need more resolve, incentive

By Khairi Janbeck

ALTHOUGH ORIGINALLY one thought of excellence and performance in terms of "excellence in performance," the nature of the status quo dictates that we ought to differentiate between the two concepts, or at least use the linkage in idealist terms. This is perhaps a part of the whole underdevelopment phenomenon. We have our share of red tape, and suffer the maze of bureaucratic puzzles that defy all logic, and seem to contradict our declared intentions. This is a result of practices that become obsolete the moment we embark on charting a course toward the 21st century.

It is not intended to criticize public and private institutions—one would be only adding to the already frustrating atmosphere of summer weather. However, this argument is made in the attempt to understand the mechanism that links performance to excellence, and consequently leads to superior accomplishments for our society.

One is certain that many will criticize this discourse, for it makes only demands, and does not provide incentives. But the fact that one believes in the creative abilities of our people, our potential for qualitatively better work, makes us believe in the saying "excellence in performance."

It is not ungratefulness that prompts one to discuss this issue, nor the lack of real achievement. To the contrary, these questions are in response to the fact that we have advanced so far on all levels in such a short span of our nation's history, that it has become possible for us to dream of a better future, and he proud of our homeland that has given us so much, and continues to be the compassionate cradle of our children. Perhaps, if we as Jordanian citizens are to be lauded, it is because we do expect more of life, and we do wish to be part of the forces that will shape the future of our region.

However, somehow our performance does not seem to match our aspirations. In the best of circumstances we tend to perform our tasks rather than hoping to excel in them, realizing only too well that in a world of fierce competition, more effort needs to be exerted and a far more selfless attitude required.

One is certain that many will criticize this discourse, for it makes only demands, and does not provide incentives. But the fact that one believes in the creative abilities of our people, our potential for qualitatively better work, makes us believe in the saying "excellence in performance."

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in a manner that makes us proud, and makes our brothers also proud of our positive contribution.

In Europe and the US also, Jordanians have been among the highest achievers in academic and training qualifications, and have excelled in their various fields to earn the respect of peers and colleagues. Many have remained in their host countries, and continue to help building a better system wherever they are. Therefore, we as a nation are more than familiar with excellence in performance, positive achievements and work ethics.

At this point, one cannot help wondering, when it comes to what can be called a dismal performance by our public service employees and those in the private sector, whether we can legitimately ask, are these not the same people, after all, who have excelled abroad, in their academic achievements, and those who have helped in the building and shaping of other nations?

One unfortunately can only answer yes, we are the same people. But since excellence and work ethics are part of our composition and performance, there must be other reasons for complacency and indifference in our collective attitudes. One cannot deny the material incentive in this formula, for it is im-

portant to sustain the self-respect of the individual in our society while encouraging him/her to be part of a larger collective. But the question of self-worth cannot be achieved without the individual realizing that there are possibilities for their own advancement by excelling in performing their tasks, rather than just waiting for the inevitable to happen with or without merit.

The individual is usually catered to the task, rather than vice versa. In the latter sense, the right person will be performing the right task, producing satisfaction for the people and positive contributions to society.

That logically leads us to the question of the calibre of the captains of institutions, and establishments. Again, here the issue of merit and capability are of utmost importance and responsibility. Those positions must not be sought only for recognition and retirement, but rather for visionary and energetic production. Otherwise, the captains will become self-seekers, and the various functions of the employees, his/her appendage.

The challenges of the future determine one side of the production formula, while excellence in performance remains on the other. Will we manage to unite them? ■

Mobile East Beat

Iranian style

IT USED to be a common political habit, when academics and policymakers referred to Iran, to make clear distinctions between fundamentalist Mollas and less headline ones. However, it was clear to some that such labels were a little naive and even, at times, unsubstantiated, especially in light of the fact that important decisions were made under the guidance of the supreme spiritual leader of Iran, and all other points of view were merely opinions.

This has remained the situation until very recently. The transformation in Iranian politics since the election of President Mohammed Khatami has become more rapid and sharply drawn. The recent arrest of the Mayor of Tehran—Ghulam Karabashi—has polarized public opinion in Iranian society, and for the first time, we witness in Iran divergent views uncompromisingly expressed, in support of the current leadership of Khatami and those loyal to his administration.

In this round, President Khatami seems to have won the day. The release of the Mayor of Tehran—arrested on charges of corruption—sets a decidedly tense tone for future relations between Khatami and the spiritual guide of the nation, which nevertheless seems to favor the pragmatic ruling style of the president.

Yet the transformation in Iranian rule had been going on for some time. The rehabilitated status of Iran after hosting the recent Islamic Conference is an important sign that points toward a resurgence of trust between Muslims with Tehran significantly restored as a center of Islamic unity, rather than a source of divergence and conflict.

The establishment of neighborly relations and the hope of strengthening them in the future, have begun playing an important role in Tehran's calculations, as indicated by the progressive improvement of relations with Saudi Arabia. In the case of Iraq also, there were objections against the use of military force against Baghdad. In addition there are signs that both Iraq and Iran will work toward resolving the consequences of the First Gulf War, especially the exchange of prisoners still held as a result of the conflict.

A conciliatory tone towards the US also emerged with Khatami's rise to power, and is reflected in the hosting of an American wrestling team in Tehran. Exchanges of sports teams may be a first step in eventually restoring normal relations between Iran and the US. Just as the forthcoming World Cup may enhance the respectability of Iran in European eyes, and improve the image of a country that is working hard at changing its perception as a rogue state.

It is undeniable that international—especially European—firms are eager to invest in the development of the Iranian oil business. Iran for its part seems willing to cooperate, as it needs capital investment to finance further development of oil fields and wells, especially in light of the continuous fall in oil prices on the international market over the past decade.

In Lebanon, Hizbullah also reflects the changes in Iranian policies, and the Party has started broadening its base of supporters and sympathizers, transcending the barriers of religious and political differences.

All in all, we must realize that the changes in Iranian politics are real, and should be supported, primarily to the benefit of the Iranian people, as well as the international community.

Of course, it is hoped also that the territorial differences with the United Arab Emirates will be solved in a manner that is acceptable to all, as a gesture of sincerity toward a hopeful new partnership on a regional scale. We all know that Iran has always been a major power in the region, but she is also required to be a major partner as well. ■

Business scene

Jordan Tanning generated net profits estimated at JD 757,000 compared with 909,000 last year. The company's total sales were JD 8.97 million against JD 12.9 million. Domestic sales stood at JD 6 million last year compared with JD 5.3 million in 1996. Exports totalled JD 2.96 million.

Deposits at local banks were JD 6,440,900,000 by the end of February. This is compared with JD 6,050,600,000 in the same month last year reflecting a rise of JD 390.3 million. About JD 858.1 million (13.3%) were deposits of the public sector. The private sector deposit share was 23.9% or about JD 5,582,800,000. The latest CBI bulletin showed that the deposits of these two sectors hold the lion's share of deposits—70.7%—followed by on-demand deposits of 17.3% with saving accounts coming in at about 12%. However, deposits in foreign currencies at local banks stood at JD 2,370,200,000 by the end of February, against JD 2,328,800,000 in the same month last year, an increase of JD 41.4 million.

The Jordan Al-Ahli Bank made a JD 10.3 million profit after merging with the Business Bank last year. Its net revenues were estimated at JD 29 million. Shareholders' rights are between 6% to 8%.

Jordanian exports of fruits and vegetables registered at 27.7 thousand tons. Valued at JD 8.75 million, they formed about 92% of total exports which went to Lebanon, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

Preparations are underway for the next Cupex '98 show for defensive weapons, which is due to open on 28 April. Regional and international companies are participating in the venue. Local companies will highlight their military and security products. The three-day event will be opened under the auspices of His Majesty King Hussein.

The Public Mining Co generated net earnings of JD 36,571 last year compared with losses of JD 14,495 in 1996. Its total assets were JD 1,900,759 in 1997 against JD 2,009,046 in 1996.

Foreign Exchange

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
Dhs	0.4124	0.4145
SPY	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEM	0.3667	0.3685
LEP (100)	0.0419	0.0421

'Virtual water'

The solution to water shortage?

By Marwan Asmar and Alex Whiting

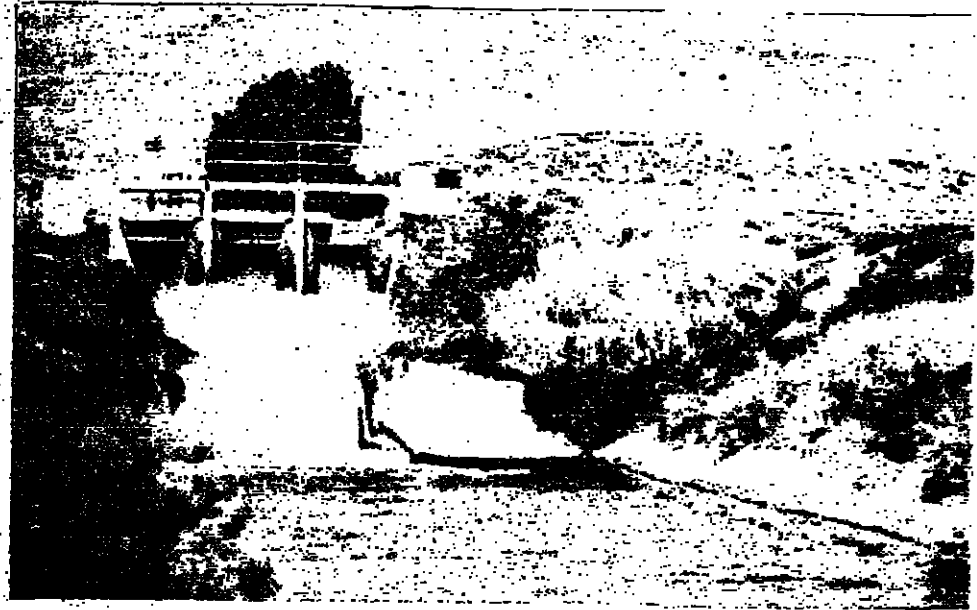
DRY-SEASON WATER shortages are plaguing every major city in South Asia; droughts have nearly dried up the Silt River in Malawi; groundwater reserves in Bahrain have been overdrawn so much that aquifers will need another 1,400 years to recover. And the year 2005 could see an unwelcome first: global water supply equaling demand.

From Asia to sub-Saharan Africa, policymakers and experts are sweating over a solution to water shortages. They have looked at many options—dams, reservoirs and expensive reallocation systems to transport water from one region to another.

The time may have come to look at the concept of 'virtual water'—water which is embedded in key water-intensive commodities such as wheat and is available in the global trading system.

Professor Tony Allan of the Water Issues Group at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London says in his project report, *Virtual Water: A Long-term Solution For Water-Short Middle Eastern Economies*: "The major indication of the scale of the water deficit of an economy is the levels of its food imports. The reason for this is that water used in the agricultural sector exceeds by 10 times the water used by the industrial and municipal sectors combined."

Allan believes the answer to water shortages is not to improve the technical and productive efficiency—rather, "economic systems; not there-identically inadequate hydrological systems." "The key to a solution," he says, "is to take 1,000 cubic meters of water to grow a ton of wheat. So importing a ton of



wheat is equivalent to importing 1,000 cubic meters of water. Taking this as a means of measurement, says Allan, more water 'flows' into the Middle East each year as 'virtual water' than flows down the Nile into Egypt for agriculture. "At the moment the international wheat trade is highly subsidized by the United States and the European Union and is therefore a very effective way for countries which are arid and wealthy to surmount their water shortage problem."

This is not to suggest a straight forward oil-for-water barter. Allan thinks countries in the Middle East should try and industrialize their economies—'emulate Israel' he says—in order to finance grain imports, because industry uses less water than agriculture. In other words, reducing the amount of water used for agriculture by importing food leaves more water for the other uses.

Easier said than done. Ian Robinson, Director of the Centre for Arid Zone Studies at the

University of Wales, sees problems with the idea: "Saudi Arabia made the conscious decision to become self-sufficient in their grain production because of the threat that the US would use food as a weapon. So they are pumping water at great expense from aquifers which at some point are going to run out," he says.

He adds, "Grain is a commodity which can be easily managed and moved internationally, making it a fundamental component of food aid, but climate changes such as El Niño will influence the production of wheat worldwide. The price can be manipulated by large companies, and changes in the world market—caused by a country such as Russia or China either becoming self-sufficient or buying up large quantities—will all affect the price."

Instead of looking at industrialization as the way out, income-poor Middle Eastern countries such as Jordan are experimenting with other inno-

vative ways to harness water. Ahmad Al Nammari, a Jordanian economist, says it would be catastrophic to completely rely on grain imports. He argues that such a view is "absurd" and causes dependency.

But no one denies that the Middle East faces chronic water shortages—so much so that some commentators predict the next war in the region will be over water.

About 65 percent of the rivers of the Arab world emanate from outside the region and the water issue has become highly politicized. The situation is worsened by population growth—Jordan's population for instance is growing at a high rate of 3.5 percent.

The region's population is expected to grow from 260 million in 1996 to about 290 million by 2000. Jamal Mathloun, an Egyptian writer on strategic affairs, says the region's water resources were estimated at 244.6 billion cubic metres in 1994. By 2000, the

Middle East will need 347.5 billion cubic metres, causing a 'water deficit' of 1.3 billion cubic metres.

Water Minister Dr Munthir Haddadin, among many who recognize that there is a crisis brewing, "If you divide the renewable water resources in Jordan by the population, the per capita share would be 170 cubic metres per year," Haddadin told *Panos*. "You need 100 cubic metres per capita for domestic consumption and 20 for industry, which leaves 50 for agriculture."

However, reluctance to depend wholly on imports for its food requirements has led to a situation where Jordan uses more water than it should on irrigation. Jordan produces 30 percent of its food requirements and imports the remaining 70 percent. Dr Elias Salamah, a hydrology expert from the University of Jordan, says this kind of water use cannot be sustained in the long run.

"We have to live with our scarcity and adapt our agriculture production accordingly. We have to introduce new advanced irrigation techniques. And we have to grow crops which add revenue to the country," he says. These could include olive trees and tropical fruits and vegetables.

"Wheat and dry farming is okay, but not in the highlands where it costs more to produce locally than to import. And we are losing our non-renewable water resources," Salamah adds.

The average Jordanian consumes 0.085 cubic metres of water per day, while the figure for Israel is 0.3 cubic metres, Canada 0.4 cubic metres, and the USA 0.6 cubic metres. According to recent official estimates, the booming cities of the United Arab Emirates are the region's highest consumers of water with an average daily consumption of 0.5 cubic metres. Sixty percent of their total drinking water is processed from the sea.

As Haddadin says, "we are using more water than we have."

There are other associated problems having to do with water quality. In the case of underground aquifers, for instance, whenever the water table drops, it turns into brackish water—a salty substance which is neither good for agriculture nor for industry. But it can be desalinated at half the cost of desalinating sea water. And, according to Ismael Hashim, a water engineer at Hydrotech International, Jordan has enough brackish water to last it the next 100 years. ■

Panos

Business Chronicle

Water projects for the future

THE ISSUE of water scarcity is an old one that is in need of major solutions. Since becoming Minister of Water in 1997, Munthir Haddadin has done a great deal. Last week he briefed the Cabinet, outlining his plans for a comprehensive water strategy till the year 2002, including proposed water investments till 2011.

As far as completed water projects are concerned, the Minister said that Karamah Dam project, with a capacity estimated at 55 million cubic metres, is finished. Among other completed projects are the rehabilitation of the King Abdullah Canal, the Jandaneh Dam, Zabada-Tafelch water project and plants to treat waste water in Wadi Seer, Fuhais, and Mahes.

Works also have been launched to develop the basins of Al Walah, Muwajeh, Al Hisa and Al Tannoun dams in addition to the water pipeline network in the north and south of the Kingdom.

Haddadin highlighted other projects linked to the renewal of the Amman water networks, the doubling of the capacity of water transportation from Deir Allah in Amman, the social security projects and the Al Disi-Amman water project.

In addition to this, the main scheme for the sewage system in the Zarka river basin and others in Irbid, Ajlun and other regions have been completed.

Total investments in the water sector are estimated at JD 3.5 billion. Referring to the financing of these enterprises, Haddadin stated that there are 21 projects that need funding.

Their total cost is estimated at about JD 1,284 million. Also five projects are being underwritten by the treasury at JD 56.3 million. These include dams, tourist infrastructure and development of the eastern coast of the Dead Sea.

There are also 11 projects subsidized by the US International Finance Corporation (IFC) at JD 254 million, and six projects financed by the World Bank through loans worth \$55.5 million.

The Italian government is providing funding estimated at \$20 million for other projects. Haddadin added that the EU is contributing JD 10 million to water projects in Tafelch and Karak, and Japan is helping to bankroll the Deir Allah water project with a grant of \$81 million.

Other projects are underwritten by the European Investment Bank, the Arab Fund for Social Development and the German Bank for Reconstruction. ■

Duty Shops go from strength to strength

THE DUTY Free Shops Co. is intending to open six new shops by the end of this year at points on the Wadi Araba and Al Karameh border crossings, at Ramtha, and at Ajlun, where there will be two—one to provide service for vessels' crews and another at the passengers station. The sixth will be at the King Hussein Bridge.

Last Thursday marked the non-official opening of the duty free shop at Jaber crossing point on the Syrian border. These and future plans were highlighted during the first ordinary session of the company, held Saturday under the Board's chairman

Nadir Al Thubahi. Already the Duty Free Shops Co has opened a free market in Amman to provide service for the diplomatic community in Jordan and for the service of non-resident foreigners.

Also the branch of Jordan Valley crossing point (Sheikh Hussein Bridge) has been in operation since last January.

The company cooperates with the Royal Jordanian which supplies it with the needed merchandise.

The Duty Free Shops Co, established in 1996 at a capital of JD 5 million, is engaged in establishing operating and investing duty free shops at the crossing points and borders. ■



Prince Al Waleed invests \$200 million in Teledesic

Saudi entrepreneur shares Craig McCaw's 'Internet-in-the-Sky' vision

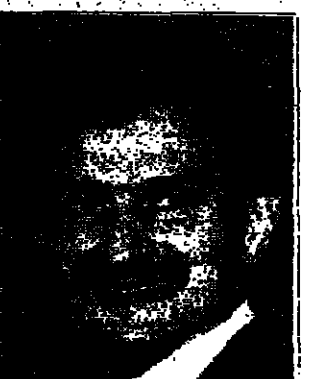
KIRKLAND, Washington—Teledesic LLC, which is building a global broadband 'Internet-in-the-Sky', announced that Prince Waleed Bin Talal Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud has invested \$200 million in the telecommunications company, through family trusts.

The self-made billionaire finalized his cash investment in Teledesic during a signing ceremony with Teledesic Chairman and CEO, Craig McCaw, and CFO, Paul Seaton, in Los Angeles.

"Prince Waleed's ability to foresee coming trends in a host of fields, including technology, makes him an ideal partner for Teledesic. People worldwide have begun to understand that where the prince goes, opportunity follows," said McCaw, 48. McCaw and Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates are the two primary investors in Teledesic. "Prince Al Waleed's stature and relationships in both the Middle East and around the world will serve us well as we work together to make available, for the first time, low-cost, global broadband communications."

Known as a savvy investor with a global perspective, Al Waleed, 41, says he decided to invest in Teledesic because he shares McCaw's vision of an advanced telecommunications network that will provide high-speed data connections to businesses, institutions and individuals everywhere on Earth—regardless of location.

"I'm attracted to Teledesic not only because of its compelling business plan but because



Prince Al Waleed

it has the potential to change the world for the better," Waleed said. "I share Craig's vision of bringing the most advanced telecommunications services to the entire world, particularly to parts of the world, including the Middle East and Africa, that wouldn't get that broadband capability any other way."

Waleed, who manages his business operations from a high-tech office in Riyadh, has made major investments in Citicorp, News Corporation, Apple Computer, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts, Motorola, Netscape, Trans World Airlines, Saks Fifth Avenue, Disneyland-Paris, Daewoo, Hyundai Motors, the George V Hotel in Paris, the Plaza Hotel in New York, the Four Seasons Hotel in London, the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston, the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco, the Canary Wharf real estate development in London, Mediaset, Saatchi & Saatchi, Donna

Karan International, Planet Hollywood International, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Arab Radio & Television and other international businesses. Forbes magazine last summer named Gates and Al Waleed the two most successful entrepreneurs in the world.

Prince Waleed, the nephew of Saudi Arabia's King Fahad, made headlines last week when a \$590 million investment he made in Citicorp in 1991 became worth more than \$7 billion following the announced merger between Citicorp and Travelers Group Inc. He is Citicorp's largest individual shareholder.

Using a constellation of 288 low-Earth-orbit satellites, Teledesic will create the world's first network to provide affordable, worldwide, "fiber-like" access to telecommunications services, such as linking enterprise computing networks, broadband Internet access, videoconferencing and other digital data needs.

Backed by McCaw and Gates, the Teledesic Network will provide two-way, broadband network connections through service partners in countries worldwide. The private company is based in Kirkland, Wash., a suburb of Seattle.

In March 1997, Teledesic was licensed by the Federal Communications Commission to build, launch and operate a global, broadband satellite communications network. In April 1997, Teledesic named The Boeing Company as the

prime contractor for the design, construction and launch of the Teledesic Network. In November 1997, Teledesic cleared its last significant regulatory hurdle when the International Telecommunication Union's 1997 World Radio communication Conference finalized its designation of international radio spectrum for use by non-governmental fixed satellite services, such as those Teledesic will provide. ■

By Paul Blustein

IMF seeks more forceful approach to crises

By Paul Blustein

WASHINGTON—There was plenty of buzz about the creation of a "new international architecture" as hordes of economic policymakers descended on Washington last week for the spring meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. In the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis, the burdens of the world economy were determined to start changing the rules of the global financial system to make future crises less likely and more manageable.

But at the end of the conference last Friday, it became clear that the system is headed for change that is far more evolutionary than revolutionary.

Nine months after a plunge in the Thai baht sparked a massive flight of capital from the world's most dynamic region, policymakers at the IMF and the world's richest countries are still wincing about how the system kept them from handling the crisis more effectively. The IMF's tradition of secrecy and diplomatically counseling member countries to improve their economic policies, for instance, meant that its advice was dismissed by self-confident ruling elites in countries such as Thailand and South Korea—until their financial markets collapsed and multibillion-dollar bailouts became necessary.

So now the IMF is bent on becoming a more assertive institution, with the aim of doing a better job of heading off crises before they get out of control. Its policymaking interim committee unveiled plans for the IMF to develop a "tiered response, whereby countries that are believed to be seriously off course in their policies are given increasingly

strong warnings."

As an international organization whose membership consists of sovereign nations, the IMF has always been leery of criticizing the policies of member countries too publicly or bluntly—in part because doing so might trigger the very crisis the fund was trying to avoid. But using a soccer analogy, IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus vowed at a news conference that he will "show the yellow card a little more," and he suggested the IMF was prepared in extreme cases to use "the red card of going public with its negative opinion on a given country."

Still, this hardly means the IMF will go so far as to turn itself into some sort of international whistle-blower, as urged by some critics who consider the fund too obsessed by secrecy.

The essentially cooperative character of the IMF is not

changed," said Shailendra J. Anjaria, the IMF's director of external relations. "If there's one thing everyone agrees on, it's that the IMF must maintain the confidence of member countries, and it must maintain the confidentiality of information it receives in confidence."

Other reforms launched last week essentially consist of extensions and enhancements of initiatives that were conceived after the Mexican peso crisis in 1995. For instance, instead of simply asking countries to publicly disclose their reserves of international currencies, the fund will ask them to reveal more detailed data so that nasty surprises won't crop up as they did in the cases of both Thailand and South Korea, whose reserves turned out to be effectively much lower than the official figures suggested. In Thailand's case, much of the reserves had been committed for future currency

transactions.

Even though some of the plans for changes in the system are aimed at improving disclosure about one of the main problems that emerged in Asia—the weakness of banking systems—nobody at the meetings was promising the new procedures would produce miraculous results.

Indeed, even as discussions took place on preventing future turmoil, the weakness of the Japanese economy raised the troubling prospect the Asian crisis might worsen anew.

"If the yen continues to weaken, there may be another wave of competitive devaluation of Asian currencies," Joseph Yam, chief executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, told reporters. "I see Japan as the big question mark of Asia."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

BritishBank announces major community initiative

BRITISHBANK HAS announced the formation of the BritishBank Foundation—£1 million community initiative to benefit nationals in the region.

Sir William Purves, Chairman, HSBC Holdings and BritishBank said: "The Foundation is symbol of our close association with the region and a significant announcement marking our continuing commitment to The Middle East."

The Bank has committed £1 million to an independent trust in Jordan to fund initiatives and activities that will directly benefit local communities. Initially, the focus for the fund will be education.

"It is a source of immense personal pride that in the last 50 years, BritishBank has been an innovative catalyst of economic development at the heart of the community. Today we can reflect with pride on our achievement made possible by our customers, partners and employees," Sir William said.

Chief Executive Officer of BritishBank in Jordan, Mr John Pascoe said: "We are currently exploring alternative proposals of how best to allocate the funds in order to most benefit the local community."

"We look forward to announcing details of our first initiative shortly."

BritishBank is the largest and most widely represented international bank in the Middle East with 31 branches throughout the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinian Autonomous Areas and an offshore banking unit in Bahrain. The extensive regional coverage is enhanced by its associates Saudi British Bank and the Egyptian British Bank. In addition to its Middle Eastern network the bank has branches in Mumbai, Trivandrum and Baku, Azerbaijan. It also has Private Banking operations in London and Geneva. ■

MARKET WATCH

18 - 21 April

Highest and lowest performing stocks in the Amman Financial Market

SATURDAY	%	SUNDAY	%	MONDAY	%	TUESDAY	%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Salinity House• Nezak Industry• Jordan Center	6.00 5.88 5.36	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Bank• National Salinity House• United Engineering	4.59 3.77 3.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Bank• Kewatir Investment• National Cables	5.09 4.00 3.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National Mineral• Universal Industry• Commercial Industry	5.26 5.15 3.39
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• United Investment• Ready Cement Factory• Middle East Complex	5.13 5.00 3.23	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Middle East Bank• Car Union• International Trade	5.00 4.61 4.76	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plastic Industry• Arab Sea• International Trade	5.71 5.45 5.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nezak Industry• Ready Cement Factory• The Commercial Center	5.56 5.26 5.17
	%		%		%		%
General Price Pointer	169,670	170,160	171,110	171,230			
Trade Volume	1886129	1123019	2697968	1332138			
Stock Volume	1451467	774074	1483431	977643			
Highest Traded Stocks							
• Arab Bank	364630	• Arab Pharm.	223045	• Arab Pharm.	900360	• Arab Bank	214000

All data provided by ACCESS Tel: 646868 Fax: 646949

03.1.1734

Palestinians revisit site of 'Catastrophe'

By Rebecca Trounson

ZEKHARYA, Israel—Early on a Saturday morning, Saleh Abu Laban steps onto the land his Palestinian grandparents once owned in this hillside village and picks up a shriveled pomegranate. But his presence soon rouses the Israeli who owns it all now.

In fluent Hebrew, Abu Laban tells the pajama-clad Israeli that his family lived in Zekharya half a century ago. His mother planted the tree whose fruit he holds; his grandparents' home was the empty, one-room house that stands nearby.

The Israeli is hesitant, then friendly. Nahum Sadok, 42, says he was born here after his family of Kurdish Jews came to Israel in the 1950s. He shakes hands with Abu Laban, 45, and his brother Amjed. And he tells them that he has no plans to demolish their grandparents' tiny home.

Saleh Abu Laban gazes at the man as he walks away. "He has my life," the Palestinian says without apparent bitterness. "And he is here instead of me."

As Israelis reflect with pride on the 50th anniversary of their state,

Palestinians such as Saleh Abu Laban and his family are remembering what they call the "nakba," or "catastrophe," the 1948 loss of land that is the Palestinians' defining historical moment. The Abu Labans, a clan of farmers and religious leaders that once owned 75 acres in Zekharya, became refugees in the war that followed Israel's declaration of independence. That facet of their history still scars each of them—family patriarch Abu Ibrahim, 85, his son Saleh, Saleh's pony-tailed daughter, Tamara.

The family's story is punctuated by seminal events in the history of the two peoples: the 1948 creation of the Jewish state, which led to the Palestinian uprising; the 1967 Six-Day War and Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem; the bloody, seven-year Palestinian "intifada," or uprising, that ended ear-

lier this decade; and the arduous, often frustrating path toward peace.

Along the way, members of the Abu Laban family have served time in Israeli prisons and been deported for violent or political resistance; others outside the country when war broke out were forced to remain abroad. Teenage cousins were shot dead by Israeli soldiers in demonstrations during the intifada.

Today, the Abu Labans say their days of violent opposition to Israel are over. Saleh, who spent 15 years in prison for an attack on Israeli troops when he was 16, actively works to promote dialogue with Israel. Like most Palestinians, the Abu Labans support the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements and strongly believe in the compromise—two states, side by side—that their forebears and other Palestinians rejected more than 50 years ago.

Saleh and most of his family live in Dabaisha, a dusty jumble of cinder-block structures and narrow alleyways that houses about 10,000 people on the southern edge of Bethlehem.

Abu Ibrahim Abu Laban has instilled in his nine children an understanding of Palestine's tragedy, telling them repeatedly that they must never forget. He makes sure that his 33 grandchildren are exposed to the family history too.

Israelis and Palestinians still debate the number of refugees Israel's war for independence created. Some Israelis say the total was no more than 250,000; some Palestinians claim 1 million. A widely accepted figure is 600,000 to 700,000. There is no question, however, that the conflict splintered the Palestinian people.

Those who stayed within Israel became known as Israeli Arabs. Others, like the Abu Labans, left their homes in Israel and ended up in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza or neighboring Arab countries. A third group, also refugees, moved in with family or friends in the West Bank and Gaza. And some Palestinians who were living abroad had no choice but to

stay away.

In Dabaisha, the Israeli occupation after the 1967 war was only a few weeks old when Saleh, Abu Ibrahim's fifth child, witnessed a scene that was to become almost a staple of the troubled relationship between Israel and the Palestinians.

Standing near the camp entrance one day, Saleh, 14, saw several Palestinian children playfully poke holes in sandbags set up near an Israeli position. The soldiers shouted at them, and Palestinian adults protested the angry tone. The two groups argued, rocks flew and the Israelis slapped a curfew on the camp while they searched house to house for the troublemakers.

The next morning, Saleh went outside and saw what seemed to him a battleground: broken windows, houses forced open and a group of beaten, bloodied men about his father's age. From that moment, Saleh vowed to fight the Israelis. "This gave me a green light to try to be free of the occupation," said Saleh, who is now a lieutenant colonel with the Palestinian Preventive Security Service.

He and a cousin formed a small resistance cell. At first, their activities were minor: they wrote anti-occupation slogans on the camp walls or displayed the outlawed Palestinian flag. Within a year, however, they made plans for what Saleh called "more active" resistance. They made contact with the Popular Liberation Army, a Muslim guerrilla group operating from Gaza, and obtained two grenades from a go-between.

On a February evening in 1970, Saleh stood on a hill near his home and lobbed a grenade at a truck transporting Israeli soldiers while his cousin Mohammed stood watch. Several soldiers were badly injured. Saleh bolted for home, hearing shooting from the scene behind him.

Six weeks later Saleh and his cousin were arrested, tried and sentenced to prison: Saleh for 25 years and Mohammed for 20. Within days, the army returned to Dabaisha and gave Saleh and



Saleh Abu Laban, center, with his father, Abu Ibrahim, 85, who lives in the Dabaisha refugee camp, and his daughter, Tamara, 11. Photo by Gary Friedman.

Mohammed's families an hour to remove the contents of their homes, then blew the houses up. Abu Ibrahim had lost his home again, but he supported his son.

In 1985, Saleh was released early in a deal that freed 1,100 Palestinians for four Israeli. Within a few months, he was married and enrolled at Bethlehem University, planning to become a teacher. For two years, he and his wife, Fadwa, went to school and ran a small bookstore inside the camp. But in 1987, little more than a year after his daughter, Tamara, was born, the Palestinian uprising began, pulling Saleh into a new kind of confrontation. Saleh coordinated committees that tried to provide residents of Dabaisha with health care, education, policing and social services, all from within the camp.

"We wanted to show that we would not cooperate with this occupation anymore," he said. "But I did not throw a stone or plan demonstrations." In September 1988,

Saleh was arrested again, this time as a leader of Dabaisha's popular committee. He went back to prison for a year, serving alongside hundreds of others who had helped direct the intifada. Today, he credits the uprising with forcing Israel to recognize the need for peace with the Arabs. Saleh left prison to finish his education degree and begin a series of new jobs, including working with Israeli human rights groups monitoring the refugee camps. And he and other Palestinians began meeting with left-wing Israelis, including politicians and kibbutzniks, in a search for common ground.

For Saleh and his family, one of the happiest days was in 1995, when Israel withdrew its troops from Bethlehem and Dabaisha came under Palestinian control. Palestinian police replaced Israeli soldiers in patrolling Dabaisha's twisting alleys. "We began to think we were going toward a quiet and safe life, that maybe we could

be a normal people and live like the others," Saleh said. "But it didn't last so long."

Today, the peace process is at a standstill. The hand-over of land to the Palestinians has stopped, with 97 percent of the West Bank still under full or partial Israeli control. Israeli settlements are growing, covering the land where Palestinians hope to create their own state. And the mutual trust built up painstakingly in small, careful steps is eroding.

Saleh said he struggles to hang on to the twin hopes of an independent Palestinian state beside Israel and for a lasting peace. "Why should we not now solve the problem? Why should we pay more blood for this on both sides? We Palestinians need to have our rights, and both sides need to have peace. Why not now?"

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Conviction of Cairo editor may spell shift in Egyptian press freedom

By John Daniszewski

CAIRO, Egypt—Newspaper editor Magdy Hussein spent most of last year trying to persuade his readers that the country's top police official, Interior Minister Hassan Alfy, was corrupt. By year's end, Alfy was out of the Cabinet and President Hosni Mubarak had invited Hussein to join him on an official trip abroad.

A triumph for the power of the media in Egypt? Not quite. Since then, Hussein has been convicted on criminal charges for his reports.

The imprisonment of Hussein and two other journalists last month has sent a chill through the ranks of the Egyptian media.

What began as isolated official complaints about "sensationalism" in newspapers has turned into the most severe clamp-down on news freedom in years in Egypt.

Besides the three now in prison, four journalists have been sentenced to terms of up to one year and are appealing their verdicts, and about 70 other journalists are facing investigations that could lead to prison, according to the Cairo-based Center for Human Rights Legal Aid.

In other developments, one of the country's most popular independent papers, Al-Dustour, was ordered closed after it reported a purported death threat by Islamic militants against Christian businessmen; and a prominent editor for a government-owned newspaper was reassigned after linking state officials.

Because Egypt has been a pioneer of news freedom in the Arab world, these moves have resonance beyond its borders: If Egypt is seen to be clamping down on its journalists, life will probably become more difficult for journalists in other Arab countries.

Lively, unfettered and frequently unwholesome, Egypt's newspapers have lampooned officials for leaping at the public trough and chastised do-nothing parliament members. They have taken special delight in social criticism, poking fun at Egypt's new class of mobile-phoners, super-rich capitalists who glide through Cairo in chauffeured limousines while so many remain poor.

But the media are also accused of excesses and abusing the truth. Because of reports here, many Egyptians

take for granted that the crash that killed Dodi Fayed and Princess Diana last year was engineered by the British secret service, that Israeli doctors have injected Palestinian children with AIDS and that Satan-and-sex cults have mushroomed among Cairo's youth.

Moreover, some newspaper owners have used their news columns to carry on personal vendettas against business rivals. Because of a legal loophole that allows essentially Egyptian papers to be printed under a foreign license and then imported, the number of publications available has exploded here in recent years. Many of the new papers thrived by giving readers a steady diet of crime, titillation and gossip with scant regard for accuracy and fairness.

It is the "yellow" papers that the government says it is trying to restrict, arguing that

they are harming society and tarnishing Egypt's image.

"We cannot let the yellow papers destroy our values," Information Minister Safwat Sharif said recently.

But Gasser Abdel Razek, executive director of the Center for Human Rights Legal Aid, said he believes that such complaints about journalistic standards are merely a pretext and that the government is really seeking to tighten its control over the media at a time when economic reforms are loosening the authorities' hold over other areas of life.

"They want to keep their grip on anything that they can," he said. "They really think of the media in general as a national security issue."

As editor-in-chief of the Islamist-oriented newspaper Al-Shaabi, Hussein is the most prominent target in the clamp-down.

He and cartoonist Muhammad Helal began a one-year prison term in March for libel-

ing Alfy and his two sons during the year-long campaign accusing them of amassing a fortune through corrupt practices.

Alfy was fired as interior minister after the terrorist attack against foreign tourists near Luxor last November, but he had already been put under a political cloud because of Al-Shaabi's accusations.

Also in March, Gamal Fahmy of the opposition Al-Arabi newspaper began a six-month prison sentence for libeling a pro-government journalist.

Whether the three will serve out their sentences is unclear. There have been hints that the Journalists Syndicate, a professional union that is supposed to police its own membership, might broker a compromise leading to early parole.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Butler: Disarmament by declaration not enough

By John M. Goshko

UNITED NATIONS—The chief UN weapons inspector said last week a recent four-month confrontation with Iraq caused the United Nations to make "virtually no progress" over the last six months in determining whether the Iraqis have done away with prohibited weapons programs.

UN failure to obtain information was due to the crisis generated by Iraq's refusal late last year and early this year to permit inspection of presidential buildings and its insistence that non-American inspectors make up a larger percentage of UN teams, said Richard Butler, head of the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), the man charged with determining whether Iraq has complied with Security Council orders to destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

President Saddam Hussein's government decided last month to permit inspection of the presidential buildings, easing the crisis at least for the time being. But Butler, in the latest of his biannual reports to the council



Iraqi women volunteers displaying readiness during a military show attended by 120,000 earlier this week. More than three million volunteers took part in an 80-day military training exercises.

made public, complained that the delay still means inspectors were kept from their work for a long period of time between

November and March. "A major consequence of the four-month crisis authored by Iraq has been that virtually no progress in verifying disarmament has been able to be reported," Butler said. "If that is what Iraq intended by the crisis, then, in large measure, it could be said to have been successful."

The report's criticism of Iraqi compliance was some of the harshest since UNSCOM was created by the Security Council following Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War. The council has said it will lift stringent economic sanctions imposed on Iraq because of the war only after UNSCOM certifies Baghdad has eliminated banned weapons and the capacity to produce new ones.

Diplomats noted a wide gap between the report's implication that such certification is nowhere in sight and Iraq's increasingly insistent demands that the sanctions be ended. Iraqi newspapers reported last week, for instance, that Foreign Minister Mohammed Saeed Sahaf will come to the United Nations later this month to reiterate Baghdad's view that it is time for UNSCOM to wind up its work and leave Iraq.

UNSCOM's efforts during the past six months run into heavy resistance starting in November when Iraq sought to expel all Americans working for the commission inside Iraq and then hurried searches at eight presidential palaces and their subsidiary buildings. UNSCOM is seeking to determine if evidence about prohibited weapons activity had been kept at these sites.

The stand-off led the United States to threaten air and missile strikes against Iraq. A conflict was averted when Secretary General Kofi Annan went to Baghdad and negotiated with Saddam Hussein an agreement for UNSCOM inspectors to enter the palace sites accompanied by diplomats.

The inspections began between March 26 and April 3, and a UN report prepared earlier this week said they had not uncovered any illegal activity. However, in an annex to that report, Butler's deputy, Charles Duelfer, said these searches were intended to be only the beginning of a process and noted that Iraqi officials hinted they might oppose further inspections of the sites.

In discussing the amount of time consumed by disputes over access in recent weeks, Butler noted, "There was a significant trend towards substituting consideration of issues related to the destruction, removal or rendering harmless of Iraq's prohibited weapons and systems."

He concluded, "Iraq's claim, uttered repeatedly and sometimes stridently during the period under review—to the effect that it is now absolutely free of any prohibited weapons and the equipment used to make them—is a claim which has not been able to be verified. The commission's mandate does not permit it to accept disarmament by declaration alone."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Netanyahu downplays internal divisions, touts vivversity

By Nicholas Goldberg

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM—As Israel approaches the 50th anniversary of its birth—and as some Israelis complain of deep, bruising internal divisions—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Tuesday dismissed such worries as "carping" by a small, elite segment of the population that has fallen from power.

Seated in his Jerusalem office in front of an Israeli flag and a wall of books, Netanyahu shrugged off the notion that battles between religious and secular Jews, between the left wing and the right, between new immigrants and old Israelis were leaving his country battered and frayed. "This is so boring, so untrue," he said. "We're celebrating an enormous triumph. Let those who carp do so on the sidelines. They're just a footnote in this great odyssey."

Netanyahu insisted that such complaints come from a small segment of society that adheres to the "unrealistic dreams" of Israel's founding fathers: that there should be one type of Israeli, European-born, "the socialist...wearing khaki shorts...and walking around in the northern suburbs of Tel Aviv."

Instead, Netanyahu said, Israel has matured and diversified into a multicultural nation of immigrants, including people of different political and social backgrounds—and he said that's not such a bad thing. Despite their differences, he said, the fact is that most Israelis today share a

powerful common history or heritage that keeps them unified.

"There's a very powerful bond that has enabled the Jewish people to perform one of the great miracles of history," Netanyahu said. "To come out from the pit of death 50 years ago and re-establish our sovereign existence here, to revive our ancient language, build one of the exemplary armies in the world...and create the kind of progress in science and industry and technology that is making Israel now the cutting edge."

At 48, Netanyahu is the first prime minister of Israel born after the founding of the state, and only the second born within its borders. He took over two years ago from Shimon Peres, a protégé of former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and a leading member of Israel's left-wing Labor Party establishment. Netanyahu, by contrast, comes from the Israeli right, which until relatively recently had been a marginalized voice in Israeli politics but which, he happily pointed out, has come of age.

"The outs are now in, and the ins who were owning the place before are not too happy about it," he said Tuesday.

Today, Netanyahu presides over a society that has achieved much and may be on the brink of peace—but in which Israelis appear divided and worried. A recent poll indicated that after five decades of worrying about the external Arab threat, 60 percent of Israelis now believe the greatest danger facing the country comes from

within, bickering among the Jews themselves.

Since his election, the biggest challenge facing Netanyahu has been the peace process with the Palestinians, through which Israel is slowly withdrawing from the West Bank and Gaza Strip territory it occupied in 1967.

Today, Israelis remain deeply divided on how to proceed, and the process itself has been stalled for more than a year. Critics around the world have complained that Netanyahu is inflexible, that he doesn't trust his peace partners and that he secretly does not want to reach a real agreement with former terrorist Yasser Arafat, who he believes poses a grave danger to Israel's security.

Netanyahu, however, puts it differently. He says he wants and fully expects a comprehensive peace; in fact, he says, his government—which can bring the support of the right wing to a final settlement—is the only one that can achieve a lasting deal. At the same time, he warned Arafat against carrying out his threat to declare a Palestinian state unilaterally, hinting Israel could unilaterally respond against Palestinian territory that "is under our control."

Netanyahu insists he will accept no compromises on Israel's security. And unlike his predecessors, he says, he does not believe that the final peace agreement will be built on trust.

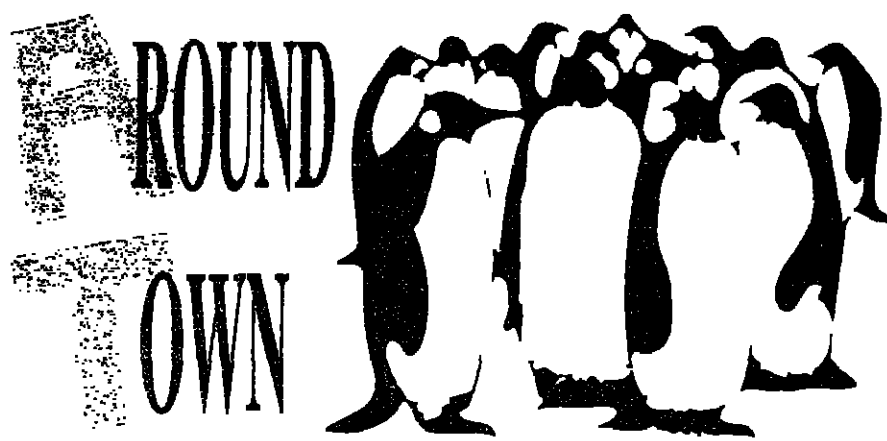
LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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Jordan's political
and cultural view

Telephones: 4



Arab Wings for humane services

ARAB WINGS, the Jordanian executive jet charter at Amman Airport, dispatched its Sabreliner 75A Aircraft to Baghdad on 13 April to fly a five-year old girl, Meryam Hamzeh to Amman in route to London for medical treatment.

During the past few years Arab Wings has flown to Baghdad many times to transport the sick on behalf of international organizations. These planes are "Ambulance Aircrafts."

The Royal Jordanian Airforce dedicated a fully, well trained rescue medical team to supervise all the medical flights.



Legendary Lebanese-American artist still prolific at 73

For love of life and art

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

Septuagenarian artist Etel Adnan says "my life belongs to art and poetry and I survive by them." These days, Adnan, 73, is more devoted to the disciplines of her craft than ever. The legendary artist is currently exhibiting an eclectic selection of visual presentations of poems by a wide variety of French and English writers, as well as renowned Arab poets, including Mahmoud Darwish, Bulut Haydari, and Tahira bin Jalloun.

The exhibition, titled "The Artist's Books of Art and Poetry," is interwoven with colour and symbolism and demonstrates Adnan's love of art and poetry. Her vigor and inventiveness bring forth persistently new techniques that capture the eye and dazzle the imagination with their freshness.

Yet despite the ever-apparent western influence revealed in the chain of new ideas that runs consistently through her work, she remains faithful to her Arab-Lebanese roots. "The Zikri," an Islamic incantation displayed in a case at the heart of the exhibition hall, is a fine example of this heritage. The inscription "Allah" is filled with yellow, green, blue and red that are complemented by a strategic use of white, suggesting that human realization of the divine may achieve incarnate form as a kind of individually created beauty.

Adnan aligns spiritual and intellectual elements in ways that create challenging



dynamic tensions and contribute to the arresting quality of the exhibition. Her picturesque approach and sophisticated ability to use line, form and color to interpretively render the poems visually, gives each of them a new dimension, adding real substance without essentially altering the intention of the original.

Adnan's working of "From A Border Comedy" by American poet Lyn Hejinian is exemplary of her inventiveness. The poem—like most of those in the on exhibit—is beautifully presented on accordion-like pleated

paper whose folds suggest the repetitive accordion-like breathing of the human body and the musical interweaving of time as it unfolds in the form of the poem's flow and rhyme.

In addition there are a number of other fine visual transfections of poetry, including Mahmoud Darwish's "Mutanabi's Journey to Egypt." And of course to pay tribute to Lebanon, her motherland, there is a poem by Bulut Haydari—"Best Wishes to Beirut"—effectively using the lightness and texture of Japanese Chinese paper.

In a sharp contrast to the traditional lines and forms of the reconstructed poems, the style of the exhibition changes dramatically to a display of tapestry in the middle of the exhibition hall. The relationship between creativity and weaving is clarified by the display of two colorful tapestries on opposite walls.

The first, a French woven rug, rich with elegant reds, blues and yellows, conceived and designed by Adnan and woven by French tapestry masters. The other, also an Adnan design, is a product of the classical looms of Tunisia.

Born in Lebanon in 1925, Etel is no doubt one of the most talented artists in the Arab world. She studied philosophy of art at the University of Sorbonne, Paris and has taught in many universities abroad, including Dominican College of San Rafael, California between 1958 and 1972. She has had an uncountable number of solo exhibitions. In addition to her work as a visual artist, Adnan is a bilingual—English and French—poet and writer.

Adnan has spent the best part of a lifetime making life an art. Her vision, given a life of its own in the forms she continues to produce, act as shares of a common creative humanity—intimate, powerful and an inspiration for us all to do likewise.

The exhibition continues in the Blue House at Bank of America, Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabbal Weibdeh, until 21 May. Gallery hours—Saturdays through Thursdays, 10:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Sweden takes part in Scandinavian film week

AMMAN (Star)—A Scandinavian film week will take place under the patronage of HRH Prince Raad and Princess Majda from 25 April till 1 May at the Royal Cultural Center.

This is a first time event in Jordan. Participants include all five Nordic countries, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The festival will focus on films for children and youth.

Nordic countries have always been attentive to the various expression of children's culture. So much attention has been given by these countries to the production of films for about children that it is considered to be a genre in its own right.

Jordan's Scandinavian Film Week has been made possible through the financial support of several Nordic companies represented in Jordan in addition to assistance given by each country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and their culture and film institutions.

Schools in Amman will receive special invitations. Entrance is free. The films are subtitled in English.

Three Swedish films will be screened. Scandinavian Film Week is launched on

Saturday, 25 April with a showing of the Swedish film "The Brothers Lionheart" at 7 pm. It is based on Astrid Lindgren's book. The story is unusual, unexpected and fascinating—a compelling adventure from the days of campfires and segas. The setting is perhaps the Middle Ages but the movie tells a timeless story. The brothers—Karl and his big brother Jonathan—travel from our world through one of mythical valleys full of challenges, which, when met with courage, transform them into the brave brothers Lionheart. The film will be shown again on Thursday 30 April at 7:00 pm.

The second film, "Sixteen Dancing Feet," is being shown on Monday, 27 April at 7 pm. It was released in Sweden in 1994 and is directed by Catti Edfeldt. It tells the story of a 10-year-old boy named Sixteen who lives with his father, a single parent. The father works as a bus driver and worries excessively about all the accidents that could befall his son while he is at work. Sixteen and his best friend feel that if Sixteen's father remarries it will give him other things to think

about. So they start scrutinizing the lonely hearts columns in search of the right woman.

The third and final film, "Nature's Warrior"—will be shown on Friday, 1 May at 4:30 pm. Directed by Stefan Jarl—also the screenwriter—it is a thriller for young audiences. It tells the story of a young boy who saves a fox cub from a cruel fate and becomes a hero and modern-day Robin Hood.

The Swedish Film Institute originated in 1963 with the aim of executing official policies with regards to film. It supports the production of Swedish films. In its work, it takes special account of the film needs of children.

Children's films have received especially favourable treatment from administrators of public grants in Sweden since the 1950s. This genre is

one of the flagships of Swedish cinema. At first, this was mainly due to Lindgren and films featuring Pippi Longstocking, Emilie in Lönneberga and her other popular characters.

Sweden has also been viewed as a model for a more poetic, serious type of children's film that has attracted international attention since the 1960s. Kjell Grede's "Hugo and Josefina" which appeared in 1967 paved the way. Lindgren and director Olle Hellborn's famous "The Brothers Lionheart" from 1977 belongs to the same category, as does Lasse Hallström's "My Life as a Dog."

In addition, animated films have also seen an upsurge. Since the 1970s, Sweden has boasted a remarkably large cadre of creative and talented cinematic animators.

Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan Surf the Web to book your bed

THE LATEST hotels to be part of Inter-Continental's charity Internet auction (www.interconti.com) have been announced following the success of the first auction. Ten new hotels, offering a Weekend Options stay have been added with a reserve price of just \$50. All proceeds from the auction go directly to UNICEF.

The new batch of hotels online and available for auction now, include:

Hotel Inter-Continental, Al Ain; Ball Inter-Continental Resort; Carlton Inter-Continental Cannes; Presidente Inter-Continental Cancun; Hotel Inter-Continental Dallas; Hotel Inter-Continental Dubai; Inter-Continental London; Royal Plaza Inter-Continental Montreux; Le Grand Inter-Continental Paris; Hotel Inter-Continental Toronto; Wil-

land Washington Inter-Continental.

Weekend Options nights are auctioned at up to 20 hotels every month, with the rooms going to the highest bidder. Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts has more than 200 hotels around the world and each one will be included in the auction at some point during the year.

Each Weekend Options auction package includes a spacious guest room for one or two people for one night, including all taxes and service charges and mileage awards with participating airlines, along with a choice of one of the following value-added Options.

Upgrade to a Club Inter-Continental Floor, junior suite, additional guest room at half price or full American breakfast for two people daily or, double bonus miles with participating airlines.

To take part, bidders register their e-mail address on the site with their secure payment details. They then raise the bid by incremental amounts. If a higher bid is then made by someone else, the under bidder is automatically notified by e-mail. They may then choose to raise the bid again. At the end of the bidding period—the next one is 1 May—the highest bidder for each hotel will secure their Weekend Option break at the price they bid.

Credit card details are not used unless the bid is successful, and all information is confidential and secure. The winner will be advised by e-mail. The highest bidder receives a voucher for a Weekend Option one-night weekend, at their chosen hotel, valid for up to 12 months. Accommodation is subject to availability.

Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts and UNICEF launched the innovative "Round Up for Children" in 1996 which has raised more than \$1 million to date. Inter-Continental Hotels and Resorts recently pledged to continue its work with the charity.

For further information: Hotel Inter-Continental Jordan Public Relations Department, PO Box 35014 Amman-11180 Jordan. Internet site: <http://www.interconti.com>. Tel: 4641361. Fax: 4645217.

Bringing to light the wonders of Pakistan

AMMAN—Under the patronage of HRH Princess Sarvath, the Pakistan Women's Association is scheduled to hold an event on 29 April at the Marriott Hotel, to raise funds for the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA).

An exclusive fashion show, Style and Grace will hit the catwalk with an amazing array of colour, glamour, texture and design. The designing genius behind this original collection is none other than Rizwan Beyg. Architect turned couturier, he is no new comer to Jordan. His 1992 show proved to be a great success hence another show was arranged on popular demand.

The Nur Collection, a jewelry exhibition will be shown in the adjoining hall. These exotic pieces are traditionally handcrafted by artisans who have been in this craft for generations. The sponsors, Khalil Al Sayegh are highly reputed jewelry manufacturers with Gem Boutiques in Pakistan, Thailand, Hong Kong, U.A.E. Belgium and Italy.

Also to be displayed are selection of modern and contemporary jewelry items favoured by most women around the world. Included in the program is a sale of handmade linens, soft furnishings, rugs carpets brass, silver and copperware. The Pakistan Women's Association is a small organization working under the patronage of Princess Sarvath who takes part in various charitable activities held in the country such as the YMWA. Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped, the Jordanian Society for the Blind and other needy charities that are brought to their attention. The proceeds of this event will benefit the YMWA's projects such as the centre for special education and the sheltered workshop for the mentally handicapped.



Schedule for Scandinavian Film Week

- April 25—*The Brothers Lionheart* (Sweden), 7 pm
- April 26—*Children of Nature* (Iceland), 4:40 pm
- April 27—*Herman* (Norway), 4:30 pm
- April 28—*Sixteen Dancing Feet* (Sweden), 7 pm
- April 28—*Dog Thieves*, 4:30 pm
- April 29—*Pelle the Conqueror* (Denmark), 7 pm
- April 29—*Whitbear King Valenon* (Norway), 4:30 pm
- April 29—*Benjamin Dove* (Iceland), 7 pm
- April 30—*Pelle the Conqueror*, 11 am
- April 30—*Benjamin Dove*, 4:30 pm
- April 30—*The Brothers Lionheart*, 7 pm
- May 1—*Kalle and the Angels* (Norway), 11 am
- May 1—*Nature's Warrior* (Sweden), 4:30 pm
- May 1—*Whitbear King Valenon*, 7 pm

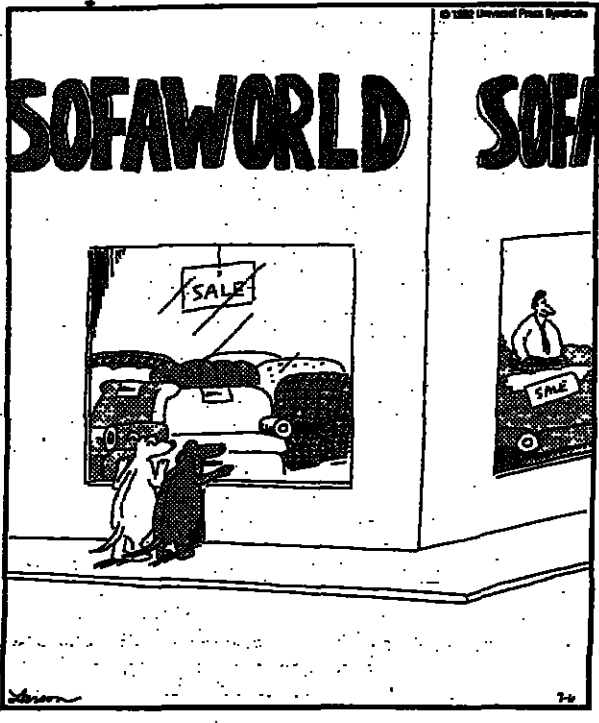
Scandinavian Film Week is presented under the patronage of Her Royal Highnesses Prince Raad Bin Zeid and Princess Majda Raad in cooperation with Jordan Television and the embassies of the five participating countries. All showings are at the Royal Cultural Center. Entrance is free, but seating is limited. Assure yourself a place by getting tickets early at the Cultural Center. All films are subtitled in English. Recommended for children age nine and above.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"Somethin's up, Jed. ... That's Ben Potter's horse, all right, but ain't that Henry Morgan's chicken ridin' him?"



"Oo! I'd get up on that big fuzzy one!"

AGENDA

- Films**
 - The Luis Buñuel film festival at the French Cultural Center finishes with *Cet obscur objet du désir*—a suave, sardonic yet bitter-sweet romantic tale—on 27 April. Shows are at 6:30 and 8:30 pm at the French Cultural Center, Jabbal Al Weibdeh.
 - At Instituto Cervantes (near 3rd Circle, behind the Inter-Continental Hotel): April 23—*Montoyas y Tarantos* (1989), Flamenco film in Spanish, 5 pm.
 - April 30—*El verdugo* (1963). Classical film of L. Garcia Berlanga, 5 pm.
 - At the American Center, Abdoun: April 23—*Jurassic Park*, 5 pm. Cloned dinosaurs trapped in mad scientist's theme park go wild. Nice special effects.
 - April 30—*The Lost World*, 5 pm. *Jurassic Park II*: more big lizards on the loose.
 - The British Council on Rainbow Street will feature two films: April 28—*Highlander*, 6 pm.
 - April 29—*The Slow Noris—Making Friends*. Children's film, 5 pm.
 - The Goethe Institute presents a Bertolt Brecht film festival in celebration of the 100th anniversary of his birth: April 25—*My name is Bertolt Brecht—Exil in USA* (1989). In German with English subtitles. Documentary film about Brecht's difficult life of exile in the US. At the University of Jordan, 1 pm.
 - April 26—*Mother Courage and Her Children* (1960). Film version of famed Brecht play chronicling the Thirty Years' War. At University of Jordan, 2 pm.
 - April 29—*Summer in the City* (1970). In German with English subtitles. Wim Wenders film about a man fresh out of jail who believes he's being followed. The question is, by who? At the German Institute, 2 pm.
 - Darat al Fuman (Jabbal Al Weibdeh) on April 23 continues its film series about 20th century artists with one on painter Nicholas de Staël—*The Other Face of the Form*—with commen-
- Lectures**
 - At the Goethe Institute: April 26—As part of the Bertolt Brecht festival, Dr Siegfried Steinmann will deliver a talk in English on Brecht's work. At the University of Jordan, 11 am.
 - At the American Center, Abdoun: April 29—a panel of Jordanian experts will discuss a variety of local issues in a forum entitled "Tourism and the environment: Promoting and protecting Jordan's natural wonders." 5 pm.
 - The Private School Council's annual conference, entitled "Creative Teaching," will be held at Amman National School. Contact Dara Al Taher at 5411 067 for further information.
 - At Instituto Cervantes: April 29—Talk in Spanish, "Cansinos-Assens, the teacher of Borges," presented by Javier Garcia. 6 pm.
- Exhibitions**
 - At Instituto Cervantes: April 26—Opening of exhibition "Stintony of colors" by Ecuadorian artist Omedo Quimbite. 7 pm. The show runs until May 12.
 - At Darat al Fuman, Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan shows 99 new pieces entitled "A Suite of Heads."
 - Also at Darat al Fuman, Lebanese-American artist and poet Etel Adnan's visual "transfections" of a wide variety of poems written by others—"Artist's Books of Art and Poetry"—is on until 21 May.
 - In conjunction with the Bertolt Brecht festival, the Goethe Institute presents an exhibition of theater posters for performances of Brecht plays by the legendary theater group Berliner Ensemble. Opening at the University of Jordan, 25 April at 11 am.
 - Paintings on hand-made paper at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street, until April 25.
 - At the French Cultural Center, an exhibition of photographs entitled "A Tour of the Dead Sea," by Jaussen and Savignac, runs until April 30.

The Star's GUIDE

Programs on JTV
from 25 April — 1 May

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—The Hammerman
4:30—French Program
5:00—Cannon The Adventurer
6:00—Square One TV
6:30—Neighbors
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovery Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism
9:00—Sirens
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Dead Heat*
12:00—Are You Being Served

SUNDAY

4:00—Holy Koran
4:10—Cartoon
4:30—French Program
6:00—Skippy
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—America's Funniest
8:00—People and Places in Africa
8:30—Equinox (Doc.)
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Silent Witness
11:10—The Upper Hand

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Hercules (Cartoon)
4:00—The American Chart Show
5:00—Heidi (Family Drama)
4:30—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope and Gloria
8:00—Favourite Films



Phil Collins music Concert, Monday at 12:00 pm.

8:30—Special program on the 30th anniversary of Jordan Television
9:10—Marker
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Phil Collins music Concert

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Cinderella
4:00—Music Circus
5:00—Heidi (Family Drama)

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran



Amman cinemas

- Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149): *Crying Freeman*
- Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149): *Dantella* (Arabic)
- Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): *Titanic*
- Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): *Flubber*
- Plaza (Tel: 5699238): *Titanic*
- Concord I (Tel: 5677420): *Ismaïla Rayeh Gai* (Arabic)
- Concord II (Tel: 5677420): *Rassla Ila Al Wali* (Arabic)

3:10—Leo the Lion, King of the Jungle
4:10—The Album Show
5:00—Heidi
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Campus Cops
8:00—Favourite Films
8:30—Special program on the 30th anniversary of Jordan Television
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Alcatraz (Mini Series)
12:00—French Varieties

THURSDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Adventures of Moby Dick
4:10—French Programs
5:00—Heidi
6:00—The Burned Bridge
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Big Brother Jake
8:00—Great Romance
8:30—Lois & Clark
8:30—Dr Quinn, The Medicine Woman
9:10—The Oprah Winfrey Show
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film
12:00—Never the Twain

FRIDAY

2:00—Holy Koran
2:10—Teddy Ruxpin
2:30—Wishbone
3:00—French Programs
5:00—He Shoots, He Scores
5:30—Blue Water Dreaming
6:00—Tarzan
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Program
7:30—News Headlines

7:35—F.R.I.E.N.D.S
8:00—Life on the Internet
8:30—The Album Show
9:10—Adventures of Brisco County
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Drama
12:00—The Nanny

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

16:30—Un bon petit diable
—Micro Kids
17:00—Cajou
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

16:30—Un bon petit diable
—Micro Kids
17:00—Magazine Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Le Tour de France

LUNDI

19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Variétés

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés (1)
19:00—Le Journal

MERCREDI

19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E.M.6

JEUDI

16:10—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENREDI

15:00—Le Monde sauvage
15:30—Julie Lescaut
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fort Boyard

Programs are subject to change by JTV

M O V I E

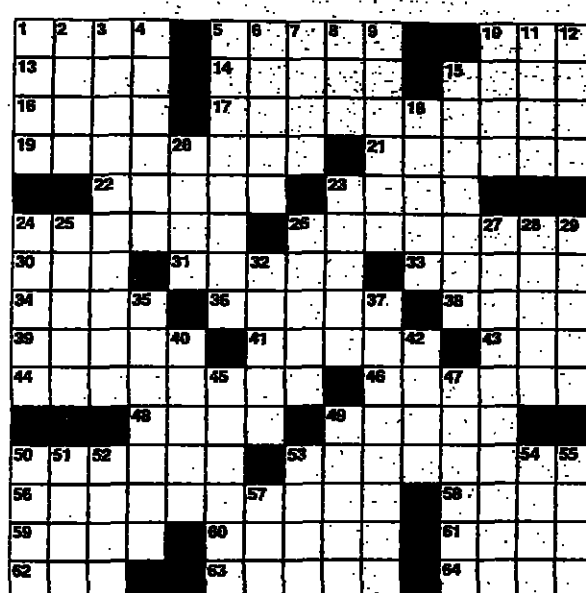


Barney's Great Adventure

Barney is a sweet pink dinosaur that will lead three children (Trevor Morgan, Diana Rice and Kyla Pratt) through a world of dream and imagination. Directed by Steve Gomer.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS
1 Jennings' field
5 Fragrant compound
10 Stylishly up-to-date
13 Mary
14 Tropical vine
15 Tipper
16 Drop anchor
17 Green Mountain man
19 Make an effort
21 Writ measure
22 Country on the Arabian Peninsula
23 Navy, e.g.
24 Island, N.Y.
26 Kind of ball
30 Aviv
31 Pleasant
33 Perfume base
34 Christiania

DOWN
2 Leashed
3 Do the side stroke
39 Attu native
41 Uses a stopwatch
43 Bar start
44 Fits of temper
46 Outburst
49 La... Milan
50 Item in a first aid kit
53 Game
56 Husband of Jayne
58 Entreaty
59 Traditional learning
60 Cassar or Waldorf
61 18-wheeler
62 Poetic period
63 Long time
64 Arthurian lady

1 Finger
2 NC college
3 Writer-director
4 Main or mean
5 hour (latest possible time)
6 Squelch
7 Mountain goat
8 Spanish queen
9 Classified
10 Shapes
11 City on the Nile
12 Gainsay
13 Quick looks
18 Actor
20 Singing brothers
23 Day in Brazil
24 Ermine
25 Inventor Nikola
26 Person of mixed ancestry
27 Oscar-winning producer
28 Rackets
29 St. fire
30 Words on a Worden
31 Last longer than
37 Comes down
40 Group of three
42 Cocatrix
45 On edge
47 Go by
48 Dirty dig
50 Man is one
51 Amerind
52 Bruce of films
53 Miss Cinders
54 Moore of films
55 Uttered
57 New Guinea port

—THIS WEEK'S— HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun is in Aries, which is good for sports activities. Money is especially good, with the moon in Leo.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Your enthusiasm knows no bounds and you're lucky, too. Don't hold back.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). Unseen forces encourage romance and lead to a lucky encounter. Pop the question and get back to work.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Practice and polish your skills. You can move from novice to expert.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Ask an older person for money and you're liable to get it, especially if you've completed all the requirements.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). These are good days to look for a job. Relax with a good book after a hectic day.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). The pressure is fierce, but don't let it get you down. Your strength increases so that you're able to handle it.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Get a friend to referee a fight you're having with your sweetheart. It's a simple misunderstanding, but neither of you will figure it out on your own.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). There's too much work. Authority figures are particularly tedious. Lighten your load by talking others into doing part of the chores.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). You provide the idea that makes the adventure go well. Don't just be resistant. Also do the work and you could excel.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Share expenses with friends to get what you need for your home. Make travel plans and put your money down on a dream.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). Your idea has merit. Get a partner to help you put it into action. Spend time getting financial affairs into order.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). The work is hard, but it pays well. Devote lots of time and attention to your partner. Your support makes all the difference.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: Love is in the air, and so is a big commitment. Follow a mental attraction. Passions lead to hard work, as you break through old barriers. Work demands your full attention, and cooperation from others.

Bridge

An Extra Chance
By Omar Sharif and Tannah Hirsch

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ Q 5
♥ A Q 5 4
♦ Q 9 8 7
♣ J 8 7

WEST
♠ K J 9 3 2
♥ J 9 8 2
♦ 10 6
♣ A 9

EAST
♠ 7 6 4
♥ K 10
♦ 5 2
♣ K 10 5 4 3 2

SOUTH
♠ A 10 8
♥ 7 6 3
♦ A K J 4 3
♣ Q 6

The bidding:
South West North East
1♣ 1♠
2NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♠

Any effort to improve your odds ever so slightly can be rewarding. Can you spot the extra chance on this deal?

North's double of one spade was negative — for takeout, not penalties. With a good five-card suit and a near

no-trump opener, South competed with two trump and North was full value for the raise to game.

West led a low spade and declarer won in hand with the eight. Declarer had eight fast tricks available. The obvious chance for a ninth was the heart finesse. Was there another line?

Declarer crossed to dummy with a low diamond to the queen at trick two, then led a low heart from the table. East rose with the king and declarer claimed nine tricks.

Now there are those who will insist that, in this situation, no good player would rise with the king from K x. We would be more inclined to agree had we not seen all too many experts do exactly that, or tip their holding by thinking before playing low. Then there is also the chance that East was dealt a singleton king. In any event, it costs declarer nothing to try. If nothing favorable happens on the crafty lead of a low heart from dummy, South can finesse the heart queen next.

Learn to be a better bridge player! Subscribe now to the *Goren Bridge Letter* by calling (800) 788-1225 for information. Or write to: *Goren Bridge Letter*, P.O. Box 4410, Chicago, IL 60680.

Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GREBA
YIRAH
PECDIT
PASCUM

Answer: C O O L D D R E E P

SCRATCH PAPER
Answer: This made her hot while she doodled.
ANSWERS: BARBE HAIRY DEPT CAMPUS

Words of Wisdom

Only by asking for the impossible can you attain the possible.

It is better to prevent an accident than to assign blame afterward.

You can never get ahead if your only goal is getting even.

When everyone is yelling, a quiet voice can be much more effective.

Your character may be your own, but your reputation belongs to everybody else.

Grief can be borne alone, but happiness must be shared.

CHARLIE



"... But, sir, how do you know you won't like the oysters flamed with kerosene if you won't even try it?"

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The man who invented modern brain surgery

Harvey Cushing took a field of medicine that was once uniformly futile and lethal and turned it into one that was merely difficult and dangerous. He was the most famous American surgeon of his generation

By David Brown

PHYSICIANS WIELD great power and command great respect when they're alive, but when they die, history is not kind to them.

The principal objects of their labor—their patients—are impermanent, and eventually die too. Should by chance a doctor be an innovator, those accomplishments are also soon forgotten, as better inventions and finer understandings overtake them.

Harvey Cushing is the exception to this rule.

He was the father of Betsey Cushing Roosevelt Whitney, the 89-year-old philanthropist who died two weeks ago and whose will, unsealed last week, gave eight modern master paintings to the National Gallery of Art. The pictures, by one estimate, are worth about \$300 million.

The accounts of Whitney's death and bequest were cluttered with famous names and connections: Roosevelt, Astor, Hay, heirs to Standard Oil and various other fortunes. No matter that most of the links were to the thinner-blooded second and third generations, the names had the resonance of greatness.

Her unnamed father, the Associated Press obituary noted, "taught surgery at Johns Hopkins University." Which is true.

He also, more or less, invented modern brain surgery.

He took a field of medicine that was once uniformly futile and lethal and turned it into one that was merely difficult and dangerous. He was the most famous American surgeon of his generation.

He was also the apotheosis of the "surgical personality"—a maddening blend of admirable and objectionable qualities—in an era when surgical personalities were still allowed to flourish unfettered. In his spare time, he amassed one of the more important collections of medical books in the world, and wrote four books himself, one of which won a Pulitzer prize.

He was born in Cleveland in 1869, but his lineage was blue-blooded Yankee. (His first Cushing ancestor arrived in Boston in 1638.) He was the youngest of 10 children, and his father, one grandfather and one great-grandfather were physicians. After graduating from Yale, he entered Harvard Medical School in 1891.

As a second-year medical student, he was enlisted one day to administer anesthesia to a woman undergoing a hernia operation. Anesthesiology at the time was an inexact science. Patients were given a sin-

gle dose of ether, little monitoring of their condition was done during the procedure, and everyone hoped the effect would last to the end.

On this occasion, the surgeon was in a hurry and instructed Cushing to anesthetize the woman quickly. He did, and soon

the rest succumbed to infection—many surgeons still worked bare-handed—or because the problem couldn't be cured—or even located—once the skull was opened.

In the operating room, Cushing worked meticulously to expose the brain with a minimum of trauma and remove tumors no one else would try to get. He devised a way of getting at the pituitary—a seemingly unreachable gland behind the eyes—by going up the nose. He described an important condition of pituitary overactivity that bears his name, Cushing syndrome.

He helped map the functional geography of the brain by electrically stimulating various regions during surgery. Curiously, the brain has no sensation of itself, and can be touched painlessly. Cushing preferred to operate with local anesthesia deadening the scalp, muscle and bone, but with the patient kept conscious. He made detailed anatomical drawings, often immediately following four- and five-hour operations.

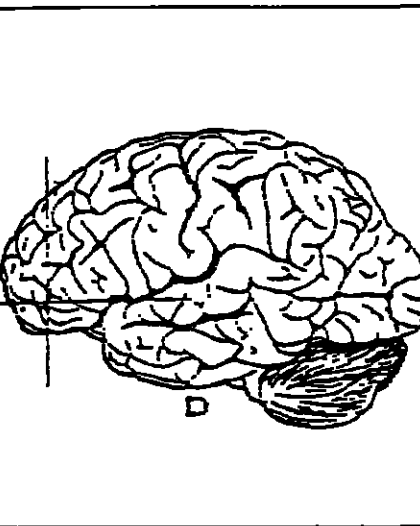
In all, Cushing removed more than 2,000 brain tumors in his career. At his peak, his mortality rate was 8 percent.

He did all this at a time when the chief surgeon's word was law, and nurses and residents existed primarily to do his bidding. At Johns Hopkins, and later at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, in Boston, where he spent most of his career, Cushing made many enemies with a personal manner that was alternately charming, imperious and cruel.

Although he was self-indulgent with his tongue, Cushing had an ascetic dedication to work, and a prodigious capacity for it. Heading a team of Harvard surgeons on the Western front during World War I, he sometimes tended patients 18 hours a day. In the 1920s, he produced a two-volume biography of the Canadian physician William Osler, often writing 5,000 words after a full day at the hospital. (The book won a Pulitzer prize in 1926.)

Everywhere, Cushing liked things his way, and in his world he was famous enough and important enough to get it. He lived, a friend once said, "like a guest in his own house." He valued his social prominence, and made sure his three daughters "married well."

When Harvey Cushing died on October 7, 1939, it could be said that he'd made a lot of people's lives difficult. And a lot more people's lives possible.



after the cutting began she died. Cushing was distraught, and had to be argued out of quitting medicine by the doctor, who offered reassurance that deaths from ether were common.

In the ensuing months, Cushing and a fellow student devised a system in which the anesthetist periodically measured a patient's blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate and temperature, and recorded them on a flow chart. This gave the doctor a window on the patient's physiological state during surgery. The practice cut the number of ether deaths at Massachusetts General Hospital dramatically, and exactly such monitoring remains the backbone of the anesthesiologist's work during an operation up to the present day.

After medical school, Cushing went to Johns Hopkins Hospital. The chief surgeon there, William Halsted, was a famous teacher and scholar, but also a morphine addict, and frequently indisposed. Cushing did an unusual amount of complicated surgery during his training. By 1901, he was on the staff and turning his attention to surgery's *terra incognita*, the brain.

Neurosurgical mortality at the turn of the century was so high that it's amazing anyone agreed to be operated on. Half the patients bled to death on the table. Most of

the rest succumbed to infection—many surgeons still worked bare-handed—or because the problem couldn't be cured—or even located—once the skull was opened.

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Food or fraud?

Manufacturing the perfect bean

By Clive Cookson

WE ARE all likely to eat genetically modified food whether we want to or not.

Genetically engineered plants are marching rapidly across the world's farmland. Last year an estimated 30 million acres were planted with crops whose genes had been manipulated to resist herbicide, kill pests or withstand disease—six times more than in 1996. The corresponding area could be more than 100 million acres by the year 2000.

The agricultural biotechnology industry is pushing genetically manipulated (GM) crops for obvious commercial reasons. Many farmers and agronomists welcome them, too, on the grounds that they enable food production to keep pace with the world's growing population without causing unacceptable environmental degradation.

But opinion polls show considerable unease among consumers, especially in Europe, about the speed with which GM crops are being introduced. Although European governments are delaying permission for full-scale commercial introduction of GM seeds, their counterparts elsewhere have shown little reluctance to approve what is becoming the greatest experiment in environmental genetics in the earth's history.

The rules of free world trade give Europe little scope for holding up imports of GM food grown elsewhere and, indeed, these are already pouring in. The most important is soy: one acre in seven of soy beans grown in the US last year was genetically modified to resist herbicide (this enables farmers to apply a broad-spectrum weed killer that will exterminate all plants in the field except the soy crop).

Soy and its derivatives go into more than 60 per cent of manufactured foods, including biscuits, bread, beer and chocolate. Indeed, you have probably already eaten some GM food without realizing it. Don't

worry though—it has almost certainly done you no harm.

American soy growers say it would be impractical to segregate GM from non-GM beans, and this year's US crop is expected to consist of 30 per cent GM mixed in with 70 per cent non-GM soy. Not surprisingly, the mainstream British food industry has given up sourcing non-GM soy.

Is there anything consumers can do to avoid GM ingredients, while continuing to eat modern processed food? Personally, I do not mind eating GM food but I am worried about the large-scale environmental consequences of crop genetic engineering and I think consumers should have a choice.

Although supermarkets label products that contain large amounts of GM material—tins of tomato puree made from tomatoes modified to preserve their flavour during processing, for example—no simple test is available to tell whether GM ingredients are present in smaller quantities.

"It is extremely difficult to prove the absence of genetically modified materials in food products," says Ian Lumley, head of food and agriculture at the UK's Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC). "Labels may be misleading if a detection limit is not specified."

Tests for GM ingredients depend on detecting small amounts of DNA remaining in processed foods. For example, a laboratory would look for the gene added to confer herbicide resistance and/or for the associated promoter and marker genes that are transferred into soy plants (for technical reasons).

At present there are no international standards for testing plant and food DNA. Different

laboratories can give very different results with the same materials, says Helen Parkes, head of DNA testing at LGC. "The food industry will need to agree with the scientific community and regulators about the level at which they consider a product is GM-free or non-GM," she says.

Iceland, the UK frozen food retailer, made a brave gesture last month when it declared that from May 1, none of its own-label products would contain GM ingredients. The initiative resulted from a personal crusade by Malcolm Walker, Iceland's chief executive and a committed Greenpeace member, who says: "The introduction of

ge

There is inevitably a risk of minor contamination with GM ingredients, says Bill Wadsworth, Iceland's technical manager. "That's why we talk of our own-label products being non-GM rather than GM-free."

"The contamination issue is like that for organic foods; you cannot guarantee that an organic crop is pesticide-free because pesticide may have drifted on to it from a nearby field," Wadsworth says. "We are trying to minimize people's exposure to GM foods."

This week, the UK government moved to help smaller companies maintain a non-GM supply chain. The Ministry of Agriculture issued a list of 48 growers and distributors that offer non-GM soy, though this was accompanied by a disclaimer that the list's accuracy could not be guaranteed.

The job of maintaining a non-GM supply line will become increasingly difficult as more crops are genetically manipulated.

Whether it will still be practical in three or four years depends on the reaction of consumers and government, says Wadsworth.

"We believe that the demand for non-GM will grow and thus we hope the availability will be maintained," he says. "We are giving consumers the choice but if they are not worried about GM foods it will become impossible for us to keep going."



tically modified ingredients is probably the most significant and potentially dangerous development in food production this century."

Because testing alone cannot guarantee the absence of GM ingredients, Iceland has had to reform its whole supply and manufacturing chain to exclude them. The company now buys soy from farms in Canada and Brazil that guarantee to grow

Financial Times Syndication

By Christian Tyler

SWEDES SPEAK it. Chinese speak it, even the French (sometimes) speak it. As the millennium approaches, English ('the easiest language to speak badly') will never have a better chance of becoming the world's *lingua franca*.

The board of SKF, the bearings manufacturer, contains 11 Swedes, one Swiss, one German and one Italian. When it meets in Gothenburg later this month, it will, for the first time on home soil, conduct its business entirely in English.

SKF is a small illustration of a large fact: the irresistible process of Darwinian selection which is making English the world's undisputed common language.

Language is the most sensitive part of a nation's culture, and there are people who will fight tooth and nail to prevent what they see as the approach of an Anglo-American hegemony. But we are not talking about political or economic domination here.

Languages are not social systems; they can live side by side in a single country or in a single street. They can live in the same head.

It is time to see what is happening, and to recognize that almost everyone would benefit if national governments and teaching establishments as well as international companies were formally to adopt English as their second language.

The only people to lose would be well, the English themselves.

Formal recognition of English as the world's *lingua franca* would be no imposition but a belated response to a worldwide demand. Philologists estimate that some 350 million people have English as their mother tongue, and nearly a billion know how to use it, a sixth of the planet's population. That is fewer than speak Chinese, yet there are reportedly more people in China learning English than speak it in the US. Even in Switzerland, which has three languages of its own four if you count Romansh English is gaining ground.

Last week the German media group, Bertelsmann, a private firm created over 150 years ago to publish Protestant hymn books, announced it was buying the American publisher Random House. This, said the company, was to fulfil its ambition to become the biggest producer of English language books in the world.

Leading German manufacturers such as Hoechst and Siemens have already adopted English for internal use; at these and many other companies, when a non-German is present at a management meeting the business is automatically done in English.

The Swedish revolution is being led by the Wallenberg business empire which has controlling stakes in SKF, Ericsson, Electrolux and Scania, among others. Percy Barnevik, the man behind it, said: "In eastern Europe they know German and in Romania they speak French. But we are absolutely adamant about using English. Even in former French colonies in Asia, English is the business language."

The European Union has 11 official languages, and will get more when another five countries join. However, most of the daily business of the bureaucracy in Brus-

English fast becoming world tongue

sels is conducted in two or three: French, English and German. Here, too, English is gradually pushing out the others; and if it were not for periodic complaints from above, officials say, it would probably take over completely.

Such supremacy can be explained as an accident of history; the huge reach of the British empire followed, in this century, by the economic sway of the US. But English has advantages of its own in the evolutionary struggle of the linguistic jungle. It is versatile as well as voracious.

Although boasting an enormous vocabulary (the Oxford English Dictionary lists well over 500,000 words even without scientific terms), it is economical in expression. Gender and case are largely dispensed with, spelling is (with exceptions) straightforward and pronunciation (again with exceptions) manageable. It is simple to learn and deploy for practical exchanges.

Yet rich enough to handle deep abstraction and poetic nuance. As the anglophile Maurice Druon, perpetual secretary of the Academie Française, once joked, "If English has had some success, it is because it is the easiest language to speak badly."

No country feels more strongly than France. Druon has declared that "the language of a people is its soul. It is the fundamental intellectual patrimony." The Academie, which admits foreign words



only when no sensible French substitute is available, is currently involved in a gender struggle with Lionel Jospin's women ministers: *ministre* is a masculine noun, but they want to be addressed as "*mme* la ministre".

France's jealous love of its language is understandable. But it is not entirely rational. At most periods of history, some language not native to all its speakers has served as a *lingua franca*. As the name suggests, French (mixed with Italian) was once the common tongue of medieval crusaders and Mediterranean traders, just as it became the diplomatic and scientific medium of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. Latin was the language of Christendom, and Greek ruled the Mediterranean before that. Today, the people of east

Africa compromise with Swahili, the people of India with Hindi and English.

What is more, most people in most countries have always lived with two languages: one at home and another when on business. Modern Italian is the local language of Tuscany which, as a result of the same Darwinian process which has promoted English, Italians use to overcome their mutually incomprehensible dialects. Parisians speak argot in the street, French at the dinner table. Until the invention of the nation state, the boundaries of language were as much horizontal as vertical: peasants spoke one tongue, merchants another, administrators and courtiers perhaps a third.

Even today this is true. The US, which has overtaken Britain as the biggest

exporter of the English language, is itself in linguistic turmoil. As far north as Massachusetts buses carry signs in Spanish as well as English. A quarter of Americans speak something other than English at home, and multicultural lobbyists seem intent on keeping things that way. Even the black American pidgin, known as "ebonics" has achieved political status. If the pluralist argument prevails, the US could find itself in the paradoxical position of having to declare English as their official language.

But the xenophobia of linguistic chauvinists is misplaced. They cannot see that to accept one language as the *lingua franca* of the millennium has all kinds of advantages. It could even enhance the cultural values they are so anxious to defend.

The most obvious benefit would be cost saving. When a visitor suggested to a Chinese provincial governor that his priority import should be English, he

looked over the banquet table, indicated the many interpreters present, and replied: "Then some people here would be out of a job." If the EU could swallow its doctrinal objections, it could dispense with some of the 1,812 translators—more than 10 per cent of the Commission's staff—and 700 freelance interpreters it already has on its books, and save up to £130 million a year.

The prospect of even more languages being added (Hungarian, Czech and Polish, at least) caused a Dutch official to declare: "It will be a disaster." Every new Commission recruit should come with English, he added. "Not that I am pro-English, I'm even a little bit against it. But the truth is the truth. English is the world language."

If governments could overcome their cultural fear, every schoolchild would be spared the decision over which foreign lan-

guage to learn first. Universities teaching in two languages would have the pick of the world's students. Small countries with difficult languages would be able to make the kind of cultural connections presently denied them, and to broadcast their own cultures more widely. As a Finnish university professor observed at a recent EU/Japan conference in Tokyo, few Asians go to Finland to study because of the language barrier, and most Finns choose the UK, Germany or France.

Adopting the language of a currently dominant economy does not mean submitting to another's fashions and values. If that is going to happen, it will happen for other reasons. On the other hand, embracing English as a second language helps protect the native language from the kind of foreign distortions which the French government so desperately (and unsuccessfully) tries to stamp out.

In the end, the people most likely to be upset will be native English-speakers themselves. For universal English would drift even further from its western moorings. Little more than 1,000 years old, English has always been a magic language, borrowing from French, Arabic, Hindi—wherever its speakers have landed. The Japanese *genki*, for example, meaning "in good spirits," or "upbeat," slips easily on to an English palate and fills a gap.

Universal English would develop a life of its own, and native English speakers would find themselves in the same boat as everyone else, talking their traditional patois at home among themselves, using the "official tongue" in public. That may sound far-fetched; but, like the rest of this agenda, it will happen because it is happening already.

You only have to hear the difference between the man in the street who is hailed in front of a microphone and the spokesperson of a company in the same predicament. The former uses short, Saxon words, and an idiomatic stream in a local accent which few foreigners, however good their English, could understand. The latter employs a Latinate version, full of passive constructions and polysyllabic substantives, to give what he hopes is authority and credibility to his words. Diplomats learn to speak this language without effort. But many politicians cannot function at all under pressure without a text. Even American presidents and English prime ministers as the examples of Bush, Clinton and Thatcher show can get into serious difficulties when speaking off the cuff.

English will spread because the world demands it; and as it spreads it will divide, because it is already dividing. It is time to grasp the nettle, to *serrer les dents*, to *cojear el toro por los cuernos*, to *shi shi qui shi* ("seek truth from facts"). It is time, as the Sicilians say, to "swallow the toad."

Since there is no escape, Britain should be beneficent. Making amends for its lagged commitment to Europe, it should persuade the EU graciously to accept its greatest national asset, its language.

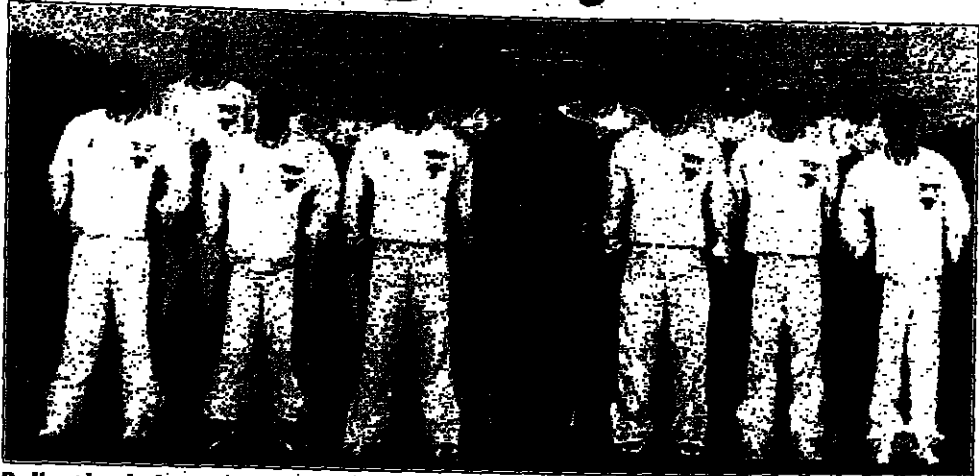
The same should be its millennial gift to the world.

Financial Times Syndication

The Star

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adzazi

NBA title no longer sure thing Bulls on verge of twilight years



Bulls relax before tough play-off schedule.

By Greg Logan

IF THIS is Michael Jordan's Farewell Tour, he was reminded last week that a happy ending that includes a sixth NBA title is anything but a sure thing.

First, the Bulls lost in Chicago to the Indiana Pacers, who played better down the stretch of the regular season than any other Eastern Conference team. Then the Bulls got upended in Detroit by the Pistons, who failed to make the play-offs, and Jordan was badly outplayed by Grant Hill, one of the leading candidates to be his successor as the league's best man.

The Bulls were 69-13 last season, but they lost three of their last four regular-season games. It didn't matter. They went 15-4 in the play-offs on their way to Jordan's fifth title. But this year is different.

There's a sense of urgency that wasn't there last season. Toni Kukoc returned to the lineup in Detroit, but center Luc Longley's status remains uncertain because of a bone bruise on his left knee. Not only do the Bulls miss Longley's defensive presence, but he has to be guarded on offense. If the Bulls have to go with Bill Wennington, Dickey Simpkins or Joe Kleine at center, that makes it easier to double-team Jordan, who made only 14 of 44 shots from the field against the Pacers and Pistons.

Jordan got his shot blocked four times by the Pacers, who waited to double-team him until after he beat his first defender. He looked like the younger Jordan, who tried to do too much by himself, and his teammates noticed.

"I think Michael has to make the adjustment," Bulls guard Steve Kerr said. "He has to step back and pass and cut because, right now, they're loading up on him. It's not so much the

blocked shots as the fact they're sending a lot of people at him."

Bulls Coach Phil Jackson said his team has had trouble executing on offense recently because Jordan and Scottie Pippen, who often take 50 percent of the Bulls' shots, have been nursing. Pippen didn't play against the Pistons because of kidney stones.

That left Jordan to carry the full load, and he wasn't up to it against Hill, who covered Jordan one-on-one for much of the game. Even though they play different positions, the Bulls scored only nine points in the first quarter, and Jordan was scoreless after missing five shots. Hill beat Jordan to the basket with his quickness on offense, and his defense was so strong that he forced Jordan to settle for jump shots. "Grant Hill was just unbelievable," Pistons Coach Atanar Gentry said. "Holding Michael in 7' or 25' from the field and 19 points was the story of the game. I thought he did as good a job as you can ever do on Michael Jordan."

Jordan won't see Hill in the play-offs, but he agreed the Pacers' aggressive defense exposed the Bulls' offensive problems. "I hate to lose, but I'm not going to panic," he said. "I'm not really worried unless (Longley) can't get healthy for the play-offs."

The Pacers became the first team to beat the Bulls twice in Chicago since the United Center opened for the 1994-95 season, and they celebrated in raucous fashion at the end of the game, causing Jordan to issue what amounted to a warning. "I hope they cherish the moment because they're going to be few and far between," Jordan said. "I don't think anything was gained. We still have what they want, and they have to come through Chicago to get it."

The Pacers' big win in Chicago came the night after an emotional win over Coach Larry Bird's former team in Boston. That was preceded by a victory in Atlanta. A loss to Cleveland on Saturday night ended a seven-game winning streak, and center Rik Smits gradually was working his way back in limited time off the bench after missing seven games because of his chronically sore feet.

"I hope it gives us confidence," Bird said of the win over the Bulls. "Chicago is a great basketball club. They'll be tough to beat in a seven-game series."

Bird scorned his players for their lack of aggressiveness in a home loss to the Bulls in March, saying, "Guys were tentative. They were turning down shots. I knew if we were more aggressive, we could score more points, which is hard to do against Chicago. This time we were the aggressor. We didn't back down. Winning in Atlanta and Boston and then coming here on the second of back-to-back nights and playing like we did, that's pretty good momentum."

If the Pacers reach the Eastern Conference finals, their depth could be a critical factor. Their bench outscored the Bulls' reserves 50-30, and Jalen Rose and Derrick McKey have developed into versatile offensive threats with Bird's encouragement. But Bird said the Bulls still are the team to beat. "My team has got to prove to me that they're capable of winning a championship," Bird said. "They've done everything I've asked all year. I'm very proud, but we're not done yet. Beating the Bulls means a lot to me and my ball club. I hope they continue to play well. I've got a lot of faith in them."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

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"I hope it gives us confidence," Bird said of the win over the Bulls. "Chicago is a great basketball club. They'll be tough to beat in a seven-game series."

Bird scorned his players for their lack of aggressiveness in a home loss to the Bulls in March, saying, "Guys were tentative. They were turning down shots. I knew if we were more aggressive, we could score more points, which is hard to do against Chicago. This time we were the aggressor. We didn't back down. Winning in Atlanta and Boston and then coming here on the second of back-to-back nights and playing like we did, that's pretty good momentum."

If the Pacers reach the Eastern Conference finals, their depth could be a critical factor. Their bench outscored the Bulls' reserves 50-30, and Jalen Rose and Derrick McKey have developed into versatile offensive threats with Bird's encouragement. But Bird said the Bulls still are the team to beat. "My team has got to prove to me that they're capable of winning a championship," Bird said. "They've done everything I've asked all year. I'm very proud, but we're not done yet. Beating the Bulls means a lot to me and my ball club. I hope they continue to play well. I've got a lot of faith in them."

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service

WIHDAT IS set to step into the new football season on the good foot after their emphatic 4-2 Super Cup win over Al Ramtha of Irbid at Al Hussein Sports City. The match was attended by Minister of Culture and Youth Talal Al Hassan in addition to 20,000 enthusiastic spectators.



Dawoud takes early lead to wins Natural Rally

AMMAN (Star) — The Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) kicked off the Jordanian rally season with the National Rally. The race was the first of three. In addition the RACJ organizes the International Jordan Rally which is part of larger Middle East competition.

The rally, consisting of ten stages—including an especially difficult one through the mountains—witnessed the participation of eight cars out of which only three finished.

Jordan's champion Ahmad Dawoud with his assistant Malik Al Hariri maintained the lead in all stages of the rally and finished well ahead of the small field. The team of Ibrahim Mohawesh and Nasr Shweh finished second, and Fare Boustani and Raid Wakleh, third.

The day held a number of surprises, with some fine participants—including Amjad Faraj and Bashar Boustani—out because of accidents in the early stages of the race.

Hamed backs up bluster, hammers Vazquez in seven

MANCHESTER, England — "Prince" Naseem Hamed unloaded his full range of shots on ex-champion Wilfredo Vazquez on Saturday to score a seventh round knockout and hold on to his WBO featherweight title for the 10th time.

Vazquez, a 37-year-old former three-time WBA champion from Puerto Rico, was floored twice in the seventh and was being battered by the young, unbeaten British fighter before referee Gino Rodriguez stopped the fight 2 minutes 29 seconds into the round.

In his 22nd world title fight, Vazquez was expected to be a tricky opponent for Hamed, the unorthodox champion whose defensive frailties were shown up by Kevin Kelly in his last fight. But Hamed (30-0), who went down three times against Kelley before scoring a spectacular fourth-round knockout, tightened up his defense and threw more jabs against Vazquez and was troubled only once.

Vazquez (50-4-3), who gave up his WBA title to take this lucrative fight, was put down four times in the fight but got up quickly each time. "He was a very good champion, but I am the truest world champion," Hamed said. "I took him apart. He was good, but a little bit

slow and I knew my speed and my heart were going to get me through."

Both fighters were very cagey in the opening round and few punches were thrown. Toward the end of the round, Hamed pushed Vazquez to the

edge of a second-round knock-out but he did come close to finishing it in three when he landed a left hook a minute into the round and Vazquez was dropped onto his back. He was up on the count of two. Hamed landed a combination to the head inside

followed by a long-range right hand as Vazquez's face began to redden in round four.

Another left put Vazquez down in the sixth and the challenger was straight up on his feet again before the fight was held up when the ropes started to collapse. The fight was held up for five minutes while the ropes were repaired with the two fighters glaring at each other from neutral corners.

The end for Vazquez came in round seven. Another Hamed left hook put the challenger down again early in the round. It looked so clean and powerful it was difficult to see Vazquez getting up again but he rose, staggering, after only a count of three.

Hamed continued the attack and came up with a combination of rights, lefts, hooks and uppercuts that put Vazquez down for the fourth time in the fight.

Referee Rodriguez, from Chicago, had a good look at the Puerto Rican before letting the fight continue but it didn't last much longer. Hamed charged in with more blows to the head and Rodriguez had seen enough.



MONDIAL NEWS

Nigerians hit Alps on quest for big purse

LAGOS, Nigeria—Nigeria's World Cup squad will set up camp in Switzerland this spring to get ready for the summer's soccer competition in France.

Austin Mgbolu, spokesman for the Nigerian Football Association, said Saturday that the players would arrive in Switzerland in May and then head to France the following month.

The players have been promised bonuses of \$10,000 each if they beat Germany in Cologne on Friday.

Lama's career as author nixed by coach

PARIS—French goalkeeper Bernard Lama's career as an author isn't going to get off the ground. At least not at this year's World Cup.

Lama said earlier this week he planned to write a diary called "In the Changing Rooms of the World Cup," detailing the fortunes of the French national team during the June 10/July 12 tournament.

But French coach Aimé Jacquet, who picked Lama for an upcoming exhibition against Sweden, will have none of it.

"It's forbidden," he said. "No player will be writing any diaries. They have to concentrate on their soccer."

Lama, who plays in England for West Ham, is trying to win back his place as France's top goalkeeper from Monaco's Fabien Barthez.

Troussier calls for seasoned players

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—South African coach Philippe Troussier said he wants players who will not be dazzled and distracted by Europe, a Johannesburg weekly reported.

"I need men who will snuff the atmosphere and concentrate on the job at hand," Troussier was quoted as saying by the Saturday Star. "I don't want players who will be amazed either by the stadium or the occasion when they arrive in Marseille."

Troussier, who starts a selection camp for overseas players in Zurich on Sunday, said that he intended to select only those players for the World Cup "who are playing first-team football," the Star said.

The comment was seen as undermining chances for Benni McCarthy, 20, who scored seven goals in the African Nations Cup. McCarthy has not commanded a regular first-team place with Ajax Amsterdam.

McCarthy told the Star he was prepared to fight for his World Cup place. "It is my dream to play in France and I am not going to let it go now," he said.

Doctor Khumalo, who plays for Kaizer Chiefs—once coached by Troussier—defended Troussier's tough approach that brought criticism last week. "Troussier has limited time and does not want to get bogged down in teaching basics," Khumalo said.

Last chance for Rai to join the squad

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil—The exhibition game against Argentina scheduled for April 29 marks the last chance for mid-fielder Rai to catch on with the Brazilian national team, a newspaper reported.

In an interview with the Jornal dos Sports, Rai was quoted as saying that he has benefited from nearly five years of play with Paris Saint Germain, experience which has given him additional versatility as a player. "I learned another style of play, a European style: long passes, crosses into the penalty area. I adapted well to that kind of soccer," he said. Rai said he was not in his best form when he played in the 1994 World Cup, but is prepared to play in France if called upon.

Zico, the technical coordinator for the Brazilian national team, recently praised Rai's performance and said he was still a contender for a spot on the national team.

Belgium taps Genk's Oyen

BRUSSELS—Uncapped Genk defender Davy Oyen was drafted on Sunday into Belgium's 21-man squad for their World Cup warm-up match against Romania on Wednesday.

"Oyen has the potential to become an excellent right-back," said Belgium coach Georges Leekens, who welcomed back Napoli defender Bertrand Crasson, Udinese mid-fielder Johan Walem and Schalke 04 striker Michael Goossens for the Brussels clash. PSV Eindhoven striker Luc Nilis, who missed Belgium's previous friendly against Norway due to club commitments, also returns to the squad.

Goalkeeper Filip De Wilde, who had lost his place after being benched at Sporting Lisbon, is set to start the game following his transfer to Anderlecht. Goalkeeper Dany Verlinden, defender Eric Deflandre and mid-fielder Gert Claessens, all three of whom play for Belgian league leaders Club Brugge, have been dropped following the 2-2 draw with Norway last month.

Monaco mid-fielder Philippe Leonard has been omitted due to injury. "What I want is total commitment, a team that fights against a (Romanian) side that, talent-wise, is better than we are," Leekens said. "We can compensate with commitment and the right frame of mind."

Squad: Goalkeepers: Filip De Wilde (Anderlecht), Philippe Vande Walle (Eendracht Aalst). Defenders: Vital Borkelmans (Club Brugge), Bertrand Crasson (Napoli, Italy), Glen De Boeck (Anderlecht), Tjorven De Brul (Club Brugge), Davy Oyen (Genk), Lorenzo Saelens (Club Brugge), Eric Van Meir (Lierse), Gordon Vidovic (Excelsior Mouscron).

Mid-fielders: Danny Boffin (FC Metz, France), Philippe Clement (Genk), Franky Van der Elst (Club Brugge), Nico Van Kerckhoven (Lierse), Gert Verheyen (Club Brugge), Johan Walem (Udinese, Italy), Marc Wilmots (Schalke 04, Germany).

Strikers: Lokonda Mpenza (Standard Liege), Michael Goossens (Schalke 04), Luc Nilis (PSV Eindhoven), Luis Oliveira (Fiorentina, Italy).

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

The Star

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service

By Grahame L. Jones

The most important video to be released this year will not be some syrupy nonsense from Disney or some equally inane Hollywood drivel—though it will be an instructional video that FIFA, world soccer's governing body, will distribute in the next few weeks to players and coaches worldwide, especially those heading for France and the '98 World Cup.

The subject matter? An examination of what constitutes an illegal tackle from behind, which, under a newly modified rule, must be punished by immediate expulsion from the game. Soccer has gotten along pretty well for more than a century without such meddling, but the suits in the boardroom these days appear unable to keep their distance from the track suits on the field.

As a result, there is every reason to expect a flood of red cards at this summer's World Cup, with nervous referees reaching for their pocket at the slightest sign of an aggressive tackle.

And just imagine what that will do. Brazil's Dunga stretches out a leg, successfully pushes the ball away but in the process brings Norway's Ole Gunnar Solskjaer crashing down in a heap. Out comes the red card. Off goes Dunga, and Brazil has to play the next, far more important match without its captain because expulsion means an automatic one-game suspension.

Multiply that out over the course of a 33-day, 64-game

tournament and it is easy to see how the outcome of the championship could be adversely affected by made and not made.

That, of course, has always been the case; remember Diego Maradona's "Hand of God" foul for Argentina against England in 1986 that went unpunished? It has now been made worse by the introduction of a rule no one seems able to adequately explain.

Already, confusion about the rule is growing at an alarming rate. To sort the fact from the fiction, it is necessary to go back to the original wording as voiced by the International Football Association Board, soccer's ultimate authority on the rules of the game.

What the IFAB said in early March was that "a tackle from behind which endangers the safety of an opponent must be sanctioned as serious foul play." FIFA then began interpreting what this essentially simple sentence meant, and referees and coaches, in turn,

began trying to figure out what FIFA wanted. So far, no one seems to have much of a clue.

Well, one man's hand is another man's bread and butter. Just ask the world's defenders, who are paid to prevent goals.

At another point, Blatter had this to say: "If a player wins the ball cleanly from behind, then it is not a tackle from behind." Huh?

And later still: "All tackling from behind is considered to endanger the physical integrity of the opponent, so no tackling from behind will be tolerated by FIFA."

OK, so which is it—all tackling from behind or just some tackling from behind? What about tackles from the side? When does side become behind? When is a player "endangered?"

When his thigh is raked by a cleat-up tackle with the force of a locomotive, or when he is sprinting, has his ankle neatly clipped and is sent sprawling in an embarrassing windmill of flailing arms and legs?

A few views collected from Los Angeles Times wire services and other sources over the past month regarding the controversy—with comments—follow:

FIFA referee instructor Ken Ridder: "We're now looking at a situation where a player challenges for the ball with one foot but follows through on the man with the other. We want to eliminate brutality. Right, and the next thing you know we'll all be ice-dancing."

FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren: "In studies carried out by the FIFA Medical Research Center, a lot of injuries sustained by players were due to tackles from behind. So it is in order to protect the players—especially the good players who can also score goals."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

New rule has refs seeing red



The French organizing comity

least of all journalists trying to decide whether a referee should be criticized for wrongly applying the rule or praised for applying it at all.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

tion, expulsion, red card," he said at the time the IFAB made its wishes known. "The tackle from behind is the bane of the modern game."

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LA Times-Washington Post News Service

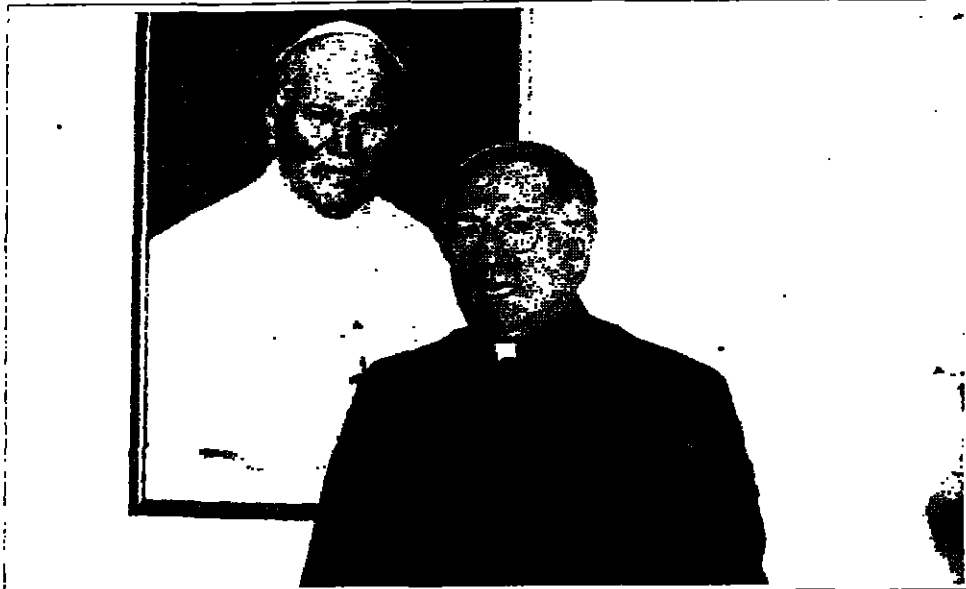
Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Religion et diplomatie

Le Saint-Siège est dans la place

Une nonciature apostolique s'est installée pour la première fois en Jordanie. Son représentant temporaire, Mgr Dominique Rezeau, nous parle de sa mission en terre musulmane.



«La Jordanie est un pays qui a ouvert un dialogue de paix et aussi un dialogue inter-religieux». Monseigneur Dominique Rezeau, représentant du Vatican dans le royaume.

Dans la salle de séjour dominée par une photo floue du pape Jean-Paul II, les meubles cirés respirent le neuf. Dominique Rezeau n'est arrivé sur cette colline d'Abdoun à Amman que depuis six mois. En attendant la nomination officielle de la jeune ambassade, il est le représentant officiel de la jeune ambassade, le chargé d'affaires plus précisément. «La Jordanie est un pays qui a ouvert un dialogue de paix et aussi un dialogue inter-religieux», avance Mgr Rezeau pour expliquer les nouveaux liens diplomatiques entre le Vatican et le royaume Hachémite. À la suite du traité de paix signé en 1994 entre la Jordanie et Israël, le Saint-Siège, qui «souhaitait un rapprochement avec des pays à majorité musulmane», s'est engagé dans la tâche. «Même si la vie quotidienne les sépare, poursuit le chargé d'affaires, le christianisme et l'islam ont des valeurs communes : dans leur dimension spirituelle et leur morale (la famille, le couple...). Mais au-delà de cette convergence théologique, le Vatican a suscité la bienveillance de la communauté arabe par ses positions diplomatiques. D'une part, il re-

fuse toujours de reconnaître Jérusalem comme capitale d'Israël et le pape n'a pas hésité à apporter son soutien à la cause palestinienne. Mais précise aussitôt son représentant qui est justement en Jordanie pour collaborer au processus de paix, «il ne s'agit pas de politique mais d'un soutien humanitaire sous l'angle des Droits de l'Homme». D'autre part, le Saint-Siège a toujours proclamé son refus de l'embargo comme arme politique, rejoignant ainsi les défenseurs du peuple irakien nombreux au Moyen-Orient.

60.000 cathos

Ce rapprochement se poursuit sur place et par le dialogue grâce justement au travail des nonciatures. Monseigneur Rezeau est ainsi chargé de participer au ballet diplomatique d'Amman afin d'expliquer les positions de son Église. C'est par exemple le texte pénitent sur la Shoah, dans lequel l'Église reconnaît le tort qu'elle avait causé aux juifs pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. Jugé insuffisant par la communauté juive de France, les Palestiniens, ici, ont pu y déceler «comme une offense personnelle», un appui impli-

cite à Israël. D'où un travail pédagogique important.

Le soutien à la communauté chrétienne locale est l'autre volet de la mission du chargé d'affaires. Dans un pays où les chrétiens ne représentent qu'une minorité (225.000, soit 5% de la population, dont 60.000 catholiques), ils ont tendance à se replier sur eux-mêmes : «Il faut au contraire les encourager à vivre avec les musulmans, insiste Mgr Rezeau, ce n'est pas facile mais en Jordanie c'est possible». Quand les deux confessions cohabitent ici depuis longtemps dans une sorte de coexistence pacifique, les 500.000 chrétiens d'Arabie Saoudite n'ont pas le droit d'exercer leur culte. En Jordanie, les relations interreligieuses tendent au contraire à s'intensifier sous l'impulsion du trône, notamment du Prince héritier Hassan, très attaché au dialogue. Le gouvernement a ainsi accepté d'introduire le catéchisme dans les écoles gouvernementales. «Le décret d'application n'a pas encore été publié, précise Mgr Rezeau, mais cela reste une manifestation concrète du désir de dialogue».

Amineh Ishay

Arabes d'Israël : 50 ans d'une identité fragmentée

«Un millions d'Arabes israéliens - sur une population totale de 5,8 millions de personnes - se sentent en porte-à-faux dans un État juif qui a commencé par les traiter en ennemi et continue à les considérer comme des citoyens de seconde zone. Ils sont issus des 160.000 Palestiniens restés sur leur terre en 1948 lors de la création de l'État juif et de la première guerre arabo-israélienne. Les arabes israéliens ne ressemblent plus complètement à leurs frères palestiniens qui vivent à moins d'un kilomètre de là, de l'autre côté de la «ligne verte» qui délimite la Cisjordanie. Depuis la fin de l'administration militaire en 1966, ils sont intégrés dans le système démocratique et économique d'Israël. Ils en ont retiré des bénéfices indéniables avec un niveau de vie dix fois supérieur à celui des Palestiniens des territoires occupés. Mais ils n'ont pas les mêmes droits que les autres Israéliens. Exclues du service militaire, les arabes israéliens souffrent de discrimination dans les domaines de l'habitat et de l'éducation et de nombreuses institutions refusent de les engager. Le point le plus sensible est la confiscation des terres. Israël a saisi la quasi-totalité de leurs terres pour y installer des villages juifs. Une question particulièrement sensible pour les quelque 80.000 habitants des «villages fantômes» non reconnus par les autorités israéliennes ne figurant sur aucune carte. Ils ne reçoivent aucune subvention, n'ont ni l'eau courante, ni l'électricité et ne sont reliés par aucune route.

Nouvelles du Jour

Akel Biltaji, ministre du tourisme

«1,8 millions de touristes en l'an 2000»

Crise irakienne. Processus de paix dans l'impasse. Le nombre de touristes pour les trois premiers mois de 1998 est en baisse de 10% par rapport à 1997. Akel Biltaji espère encore limiter les dégâts, malgré une situation politique régionale agitée et attend sereinement le tournant du millénaire.

Le Jourdain : Comment expliquer cette baisse de 10% ? Akel Biltaji : À cause de Netanyahu et Saddam Hussein. Mais je ne veux pas lier la chute du nombre de touristes avec ce qui passe autour de nous. Nous voulons vendre la Jordanie comme un flot de paix. Et nous y avons réussi l'an passé (En 1997, le pays a connu une modeste croissance de 3% par rapport à 1996 avec 1,2 millions de touristes. NDLR). Mais cette année, l'escalade dans les affrontements a été si forte que les gens ont pensé que la Troisième Guerre Mondiale était sur le point d'éclater.

Le Jourdain : N'attendez-vous pas la venue de davantage de touristes israéliens ? A. B. : Ils représentent 11% du nombre total et en majorité ce sont des Arabes israéliens. Or ils peuvent venir autant qu'ils le

veulent. Nous sommes un pays ouvert, où il n'y a pas de restrictions de visas comme en Israël. Je reste néanmoins moins déçu car les dividendes du traité de paix n'ont pas atteint nos espérances. Nous souhaitons une croissance sans obstacles mais le gouvernement d'Israël en a décidé autrement. À leur déclin et celui de toute la région.

Le Jourdain : Que souhaitez-vous pour le reste de l'année en cours ?

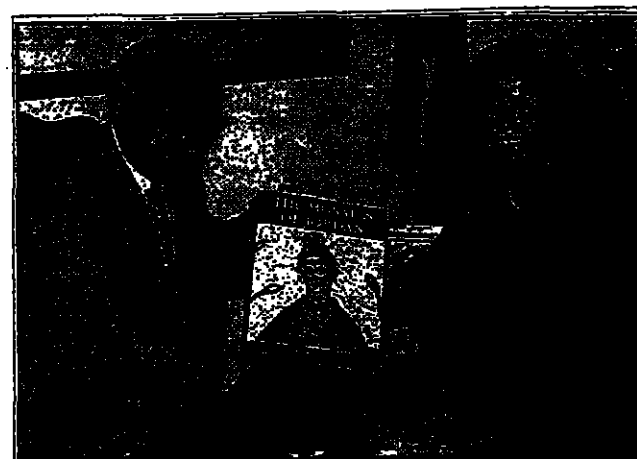
A. B. : J'espère que les perspectives de réconciliation entre les différentes parties de la région seront meilleures. J'espère que nous remplirons nos objectifs avec une hausse de 6%, ou moins que nous parvenions à maintenir le même taux de croissance qu'en 1997 sur la période à venir.

Le Jourdain : Des hôtels sont en construction un peu par-

tout à Amman, à Aqaba, sur la Mer Morte. N'est-ce pas présomptueux ?

A. B. : Au contraire, nous avons besoin de plus en plus d'hôtels. Sur le site de la Mer Morte, il n'y a qu'un hôtel avec 150 lits. Or nous voulons aller jusqu'à 20.500 lits. Il faut développer cette région qui ne faisait pas du tout avant 1994 puisqu'il s'agissait d'une zone militaire.

À Aqaba, il y a une pénurie d'hôtels en comparaison avec Sharm el Sheikh ou Eilat. Pendant les vacances, plus de 75.000 Jordanais viennent à Aqaba et souvent ils doivent rester dehors car il n'y a plus de chambres libres. D'autre part, il n'y a toujours pas d'hôtel de classe mondiale et nous préparons un vaste projet pour un vaste complexe touristique. Aqaba a besoin d'infrastructures qui lui font défaut certaines saisons. Nous



M. Biltaji et son homologue française Michelle Demessine

voulons en faire le centre névralgique du sud. Enfin, à Amman, qui peut accueillir une conférence de plus de 1500 personnes. La capitale a besoin d'hôtels pour

de grandes rencontres ou de grands événements comme les prochains Jeux Panarabes et également en prévision de l'an 2000. On ne fait pas des hôtels comme on prépare un café instantané.

Michelle Demessine, première «cliente» d'Ammon

Petits fours, boissons fraîches et deux ministres. Tous les ingrédients sont là pour une inauguration en règle de l'école Ammon d'hôtellerie et de tourisme. Pas tout à fait, cependant. L'école ne sera officiellement ouverte qu'en septembre prochain. Mais ses administrateurs ne pouvaient laisser passer la présence pendant deux jours de la secrétaire d'État française au tourisme, Michelle Demessine. Outre les sites classiques (Jérash, Pétra, en belco) qui ont attiré en 1997 plus de 30.000 Français, la visite de l'école fut également inscrite à son emploi du temps. Le ministre jordanien du tourisme et des antiquités, Akel Biltaji, plus charmant que jamais, l'accompagnait dans les locaux flambants neufs de cet établissement, projet soutenu depuis

trois ans par l'Ambassade de France (avec notamment un prêt avantageux de 4 millions de francs). Des suites en hôtellerie et en tourisme furent réservées pour la ministre. Une trentaine d'élèves ont déjà fait leur entrée (avec retard) dans la promotion lancée par l'école. L'édifice, d'inspiration moderne, est en cours. Selon les di-rigeants de l'école, l'édifice pourrait être ouvert au public dès la rentrée prochaine. En attendant de recevoir de «vrais» clients, les élèves apprennent dans leurs salles de classe et de travaux dirigés à dresser une table, à cuire à point des pommes-

frites ou des omelettes brisées. «Depuis mon enfance, les hôtels me fascinent, se souvient un des étudiants, j'ai travaillé dans un hôtel à Paris, un poste sûr». Tous les étudiants comptent ainsi sur la croissance touristique qu'on leur promet pour l'an 2000 (voir encadré ci-dessus). Ils ne seront pas les seuls à faire calcul. À plein régime, l'école Ammon attendra former quelque 500 potes dans les trois langues (arabe, français, anglais) et des stages en entreprise, elle s'engagera à être l'une des rives de la région et veut se placer au niveau de ses meilleures cousines européennes. Les places de cette formation d'hôtellerie sont donc déjà limitées. Les élèves doivent avoir le baccalauréat et payer pour l'instant 720 JD semestre.

Le Jourdain : Combien de touristes attendez-vous à l'horizon 2000 ?

A. B. : Nous serons contents en 1999-2000 d'avoir une croissance d'un million 10%. Nous ne sommes pas que nous aurons 5 millions de touristes. Comment pourrait-on les accueillir d'ailleurs ? Nous ne sommes pas prêts pour 5 millions de touristes mais pour une croissance graduelle qui nous permette de bien remplir les hôtels tout au long de l'année et de réduire l'effet de cycle saisonnier, afin d'obtenir un développement soutenu de notre tourisme et de créer des emplois. Nous ne voulons pas 5 millions de personnes en 2000 et plus que la moitié en 2001. Nous tablons plutôt sur 1,7 ou 1,8 millions de touristes au passage du millénaire.

Santé

Le refuge des folies douces

L'hôpital Al-Rashid est l'un des rares établissements régionaux spécialisés en psychiatrie. Dans cette sorte d'hôtel cinq étoiles, on tente de changer le regard de la société jordanienne sur les malades mentaux.

À l'hôpital Al-Rashid, il vous plaît !

C'est un nouvel hôpital. Ici, pour soigner les malades psychiques, on attend le dernier mot, le chauffeur de taxi bavard devient brusquement taciturne et des regards méfiants remplacent ses paroles. Comme lui, beaucoup de gens prennent les patients en psychiatrie pour des fous. «J'ai des moments de dépression, confie une malade en s'échappant

ses larmes, je consulte un psychiatre et seul mon mari est au courant. Quand il est en colère, il me traite de folle et pourtant c'est un ingénieur cultivé». Pourtant le mot «fou» n'existe pas dans le dictionnaire de la psychiatrie. Comme le souligne le docteur Munir Naser, «la maladie psychique est comme n'importe quelle autre maladie, comme le cancer, l'hypertension, les crises cardiaques...». Mais quand le médecin décide de garder le patient à

l'hôpital pour quelques jours, c'est le drame : la famille refuse souvent et l'état du malade s'aggrave.

Charlatanisme

Pourquoi l'hôpital des «fous» suscite-t-il ainsi la peur et la honte ? Difficile de répondre. Il y a sans doute pas mal d'ignorance derrière ces préjugés. On colle facilement l'image de l'arriéré mental, qui, abandonné de tous, erre en guenilles dans les rues, sur n'importe quelle personne atteinte d'un trouble psychique. Il y a aussi les médias qui ne font rien pour éviter l'amalgame : le moindre crime un peu bizarre a alors toujours un dérivé de la cervelle pour auteur. «À la suite de ce type de faits divers, beaucoup de malades s'inquiètent et se demandent s'ils ne sont pas des criminels en puissance», explique un psychiatre de

l'hôpital Al-Rashid.

Cependant les mentalités évoluent, surtout dans les classes sociales les plus élevées de la société, constate le docteur Khaled Moughabih. Mais les réflexes de honte sont encore les plus courants. Ainsi, pour s'épargner l'humiliation d'une visite à l'hôpital, nombreux préfèrent consulter en catimini et tombent bien souvent sur des usurpateurs : «À la suite de la mort de mon frère, j'ai souffert d'une dépression et pendant deux ans, je suis allée chez un psychiatre. Peine perdue, en réalité, il s'agissait d'un charlatan», avoue Amineh, une femme au foyer. Cette naïveté est répandue même chez des personnes instruites. «Il y a des malades qui arrivent à l'hôpital à bout de souffle, le corps brûlé, le visage défiguré», raconte Victoria, une infirmière, quand l'incendiaire n'arrive pas à chasser les mau-

vais esprits, le feu et les coups peuvent le faire !»

Bien entendu, ces méthodes ne sont pas du genre de la maison Al-Rashid. À l'intérieur de ce cube blanc soigné et verdoyant des collines fleuries et verdoyantes du nord-est d'Amman, le luxe et la gentillesse semblent indissociables.

Pas de blouses blanches

Dans la salle commune, dite «la Brise», on a l'impression d'être comme chez soi : tout le monde se connaît. Les malades, les médecins et les infirmiers sont assis dans des gros fauteuils moelleux bleu marine ou verts, rangés en cercle devant la télévision. Ils rigolent, bavardent, l'ambiance est familiale et le public, uniforme : pas de différence visuelle entre les uns et les autres car le personnel médical ne porte pas de blouses blanches. Au fond du salon, la salle à manger accueille des nappes élégantes, des vases fleuris et s'ouvre de tous les côtés sur les paysages pittoresques de la plaine de Balqa. «Notre principe est de s'occuper du malade dans une atmosphère différente de celle d'un hôpital classique», souligne Walid Sarhan, le directeur de l'établissement. C'est lui qui a décidé de donner des noms de fleurs aux différentes sections d'un hôpital à la fois champêtre et ultra-moderne.

Le traitement s'effectue ne deux étapes : dans les trois premiers jours de son arrivée, il s'agit de le maîtriser, de le stabiliser. Il reste donc dans sa chambre sous l'observation d'une infirmière qui est la sur-tout pour le protéger de lui-même. Une infirmière qui «doit être sûre d'elle, attentive, calme et diplomate», qualifie Victoria en experte. Ce premier contact avec l'hôpital n'est pas toujours bien vécu par le malade. «Je sortais d'ici, comme je suis arrivé, sans aucun changement, confie en pleurant Ahmad, en observation que depuis trois jours, la maison est une prison, l'hôpital des fous



Le dialogue avec les malades est une des missions essentielles du personnel médical.

même. Une infirmière qui «doit être sûre d'elle, attentive, calme et diplomate», qualifie Victoria en experte. Ce premier contact avec l'hôpital n'est pas toujours bien vécu par le malade. «Je sortais d'ici, comme je suis arrivé, sans aucun changement, confie en pleurant Ahmad, en observation que depuis trois jours, la maison est une prison, l'hôpital des fous

est une autre prison». Deuxième étape, la réintégration du malade : il peut alors quitter sa chambre et se déplacer librement dans l'hôpital. «Raed est ici depuis un an, il est atteint de schizophrénie. C'est l'ami de tout le monde, on vient souvent à mon bureau, on parle, on boit du café», raconte une autre infirmière. L'hôpital essaye de pousser autant que

possible les malades à participer à la vie collective. «On organise des pique-niques, les rassemblent les employés, les psychiatres et les patients, on fait des fêtes : il y a un mois, c'était l'anniversaire de Raed qui a invité ses amis, on va au restaurant, on fait les courses et les malades parfois accompagnent le chauffeur de bus qui amène les employés de l'hôpital», détaille Amal Hijazi, une infirmière. Dans les années à venir, l'hôpital veut créer un centre de formation professionnelle afin d'apprendre un métier aux malades dont les séjours sont les plus longs. Déjà certains n'hésitent pas à venir donner un coup de main à la cafétéria. Une façon comme une autre de ne pas perdre pied avec la réalité.

Tahrir Salah

Afin de respecter l'enseignement des malades, leurs prévisions ont été modifiées.

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel d'Amman

Festival

Semaine du film scandinave du 25 avril au 1er mai au Centre culturel royal.

Pour la première fois, cinq pays nordiques, le Danemark, la Finlande, l'Islande, la Norvège et la Suède, se sont associés pour faire découvrir leur cinéma à Amman. Les films proposés sont destinés particulièrement aux enfants de plus de neuf ans. Ils seront sous-titrés en anglais. Entrée libre. Pour plus d'informations, vous pouvez contacter l'ambassade de Suède au 5931177.

Cinéma

Cycle consacré au réalisateur Luis Buñuel. Cet obscur objet du désir, film de 1977 en couleur, sous-titré en arabe avec Carole Bouquet. La description de la recherche désespérée de l'amour fou. Lundi 27 avril à 18h30 et 20h30 au Centre culturel français. Renseignements au 4636445 ou 4637009.

Exposition

Peuple de la Mer Morte, 1908-1909. Photographies noir et blanc des pères Jausen et Savignac de l'école biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem. «Une croisière, un périphe de la mer de sel, sur le lac Asphaltite aux eaux sombres et tournoyantes sous un couvercle sur les tristes secrets des cités maudites» (Renaud Escande). Jusqu'au 30 avril au CCF.



L'hôpital Al-Rashid dans la banlieue fleurie d'Amman.

Handwritten signature or note at the bottom of the page.

Kidnap plot gone bad makes exciting film fare

By Kevin Thomas

HOLLYWOOD—In the admirably swift opening of the psychological mystery thriller 'Suicide Kings,' a smart B-picture with lots of A-players, a shrewd veteran gangster, wonderfully well-played by Christopher Walken, is kidnapped by a bunch of preppy types and whisked off to a suburban mansion.

It seems that the sister of one of the kidnappers (Henry Thomas) has herself been kidnapped and is being held for a \$2 million ransom. What to do but zero in on Walken, who's sure to have access to that kind of money? (Thomas has credible reasons for not turning to his own rich father.)

"You didn't think this thing through too good, did you?" asks Walken, though he was initially impressed that these guys could grab him, dope him and tie him in a chair. But once they've pulled off their daring snatch, they seem to have serious problems figuring just how to play out the rest of their caper. They haven't exactly endeared themselves to Walken, having chopped off one of his fingers, explaining that they've already received one of Thomas' sister's fingers from her kidnappers.

If Thomas and his pals seem unsure of what to do next, that's not the case with debuting director Peter O'Fallon and his producer Wayne Rice, who wrote 'Suicide Kings' exceedingly clever script with Josh McKinney and Gina Goldman. What ensues is a classic battle of wits, sustained by strong characterizations and a plot packed with surprises.

Early on, 'Suicide Kings' deftly establishes the gangster's superiority over his captors. He's much like Beat Takeshi's gangster in the current 'Sonatine.' Walken's Charlie Barrett (born Carlo Barzuchca) is a cold-blooded killer, but he has wit, courage and strength of character way beyond what these preppy jerks could imagine. Barrett is at least a man of his word.

As for his captors, in addition to Thomas' ineffectual Avery, they are a medical student, T.K. (Jeremy Sisto),

who Charlie immediately realizes is on dope; Max (Sean Patrick Flanery), the kidnapped sister's boyfriend; Brett (Jay Mohr), an obnoxious bothead; and Ira (Johnny Galecki).

'Suicide Kings,' which takes its title from a game of poker, belongs primarily to Walken and Galecki, cast as a naive rich nerd, and they run with it.

Ira has been conned into letting the guys he'd like to have as his pals use the immaculate, elegant home of his parents (who are away, naturally) as the place to hold Charlie prisoner. Poor Ira shrieks at the outrage of what's going on, not to mention how disrespectful the guys are of his parents' expensive furnishings (and their liquor supply).

Galecki's Ira is hilarious, but Charlie knows that of the entire group he's the only one worth anything. For Ira, the incident proves to be an unexpected rite of passage.

While 'Suicide Kings' takes place primarily in Ira's family mansion, there is lots going on elsewhere involving an amusing Denis Leary as Charlie's hit man, a guy obsessed with expensive boots. Striking a more serious note are Charlie's loyal supporters, his level-headed lawyer (Cliff DeYoung, impeccable as always) and Laura San Giacomo as a madam operating under Charlie's protection. The film's writers provided good material for the film's many actors, all of whom excel under O'Fallon's taut direction. The film benefits from another of Graeme Revell's mood-enhancing scores.

O'Fallon and ace cinematographer Christopher Baffa, sticking to tightly composed shots, make downtown Los Angeles pass for Midtown Manhattan in acceptable fashion in the film's opening sequences, and 'Suicide Kings' has lots of rhythm and pace for a film so substantially confined to one setting. This Live Entertainment release is satisfying, unpretentious fun.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



Christopher Walken

Cosmic drama played out by mechanical men Lip-syncing robots spread Hare Krishna word

By Kenneth J. Cooper

NEW DELHI—The familiar hands of religious disciples who shave their heads, don saffron robes and clink hand cymbals as they chant "Hare Krishna" have found a new, high-tech way of spreading their ancient gospel.

Robots. Here in the capital of the land where Hinduism was born 3,500 years ago, the New York-based sect has opened an elegant sandstone temple and museum complex that blends a bit of advanced technology and some Hollywood gimmickry with one of the world's oldest religions.

It is an unusual experiment in a developing country described by social commentators as continually confronting conflicts between the traditional and the modern.

No problem, say representatives of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a Hindu sect founded by an Indian guru in 1966 and known colloquially to many Americans as the Hare Krishnas.

"Some people have the feeling that technology and religion go ill together," said Madana-Mohana Das, a Russian-born spokesman for the International Society. "I don't think so. They go well together. We use sophisticated technology to present the same ideas."

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who earlier this month dedicated the \$6 million center that rises up from a rock outcropping, praised what he called "an astonishing demonstration of the use of high-tech to popularize the higher truth of life and the universe."

In the complex's 150-seat theater, visitors will be able to watch human-like robots dramatize a decisive episode from the Mahabharata, an ancient Hindu epic about an inter-generational war. The moviemaker Steven Spielberg used similar technical wizardry, provided by the same Los Angeles company, to animate his dinosaurs in "Jurassic Park."

The most advanced robots, which look like mannequins, represent the Hindu god Krishna, his warrior Arjuna and Swami Prabhupada, founder of the Hare Krishnas. These robots mimic human gestures, lip-syncing their lines in English, blink-

ing their eyes, raising their eyebrows and tilting their heads.

On the main set, a saffron-robed Swami Prabhupada and four disciples sit in the lotus position in the foreground, with Krishna and Arjuna towering above them in a chariot in the background. The two ancient figures wear traditional warrior costumes, complete with gleaming, bejeweled breastplates.

During a short dialogue, music plays on a surround-sound system, and a video illustrates Krishna's transmutation from a human into a "universal form," displayed to demonstrate his godliness and buck up Arjuna's flagging spirits before a big battle against his relatives.

"Oh universal form, I see your body expanded everywhere without limit," a breathless Arjuna says. "The sun and moon are your eyes. I see you with blazing fire coming from your mouth, burning this universe by your radiance."

In his reply, Krishna orders his warrior: "Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by my arrangement, and you are but an instrument in the fight."

For untutored Westerners, the sequence may come across as melodramatic. But for Hindus, the dialogue expresses a central belief in doing one's duty as an act of devotion to God. A Library of Congress reference book on India describes this part of the epic as "one of the great jewels of world religious literature."

Because the museum's interior is under construction, the robot theater is not scheduled to open to the public for several months. The sect has already placed some less sophisticated robots on exhibit in Los Angeles and in Bangalore, in southern India.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Robots representing the Hindu god Krishna, left, warrior Arjuna, and sect founder Prabhupada, seated, at the new Hare Krishna temple in New Delhi, India. Photo by Lucinda



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THE STAR'S WORKING COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NOTES

Edited by Zeid Nasser

1998 could be the year notebook PC sales expand in Jordan and the Middle East:

Notebook PC sales 'on the move'

By a Star Staff Writer

WILL 1998 be the year for the notebook PC market in the Middle East to soar?

This is a question on most computer resellers' minds, as the notebook computer didn't catch on as quickly as expected in the region.

What is true as far as the region is concerned is also the case in Jordan. Several resellers I spoke to even classified the notebook market as 'dead'.

Although somewhat harsh, this opinion could be explained by the very limited clientele base for notebook PCs—mostly large corporations and international organizations.

To better understand why the notebook market is taking so long to develop, one needs to realize that the desktop market is still in a relatively new growth phase. How can you sell notebook PCs to a market that is still adopting desktop models?

This is set to change in the coming two years, as user needs mature and business communities in the region begin to appreciate the value of working on the move, and learn to appreciate the convenience of light-weight computing.

The industry's slow growth

was partly due to the high price of notebook PC models, but recent price cuts and budget notebooks have been making a difference. This has resulted in reasonable sales figures over the past three years. Also contributing to notebook sales is technology

have the added advantage of real portability. Estimates show that the notebook in the Middle East and Africa is growing at a rate of 18 percent a year, and is expected to surpass the 70,000 mark this year.

The leaders in field of notebook computers worldwide are the same top sellers of other equipment in the Middle East: Compaq and Toshiba.

Certain vendors registered massive growth in notebook sales in the region during 1997. IBM for example enjoyed a growth of around 142 percent in notebook PCs last year.

Some would say that the notebook will make the desktop PC obsolete soon, due to the fact that it will deliver the same performance and expandability in a smaller, more practical case.

Well, we will believe it only when we see it. For now, let's just say that the notebook computer is set to make gains in the region. It's about time, and we hope to see more competitive pricing in Jordan's notebook market soon.

After all, we would all like to take our work wherever we are, and actually experience the feeling we have so often heard about, known as 'office anywhere'.



Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's Working Computing & High Tech Notes. This is the absolute source for all the latest news, information, and analysis on the computer and IT industry in Jordan and the Middle East. For more information, contact us at: zeid@star.com.jo or [+962 777 777 777](tel:+96277777777).

Hewlett-Packard leads workstations

A STUDY by International Data Corporation (IDC) found that Hewlett-Packard was the world's leading combined NT and Unix workstation vendor for the year 1997.

This was published in a report entitled "1997 Workstation Market Year in Review." HP's Unix and Windows NT-based workstations totalled some 330,559 worldwide during the year.

This represents a growth of more than 43 percent compared to the year before.

This puts HP far ahead of Sun Microsystems, due to the

Windows NT.

Of course, Sun is still the largest Unix-workstation company, with a total of 285,815 units (as the company does not focus on Windows NT stations).

According to the report, Sun's workstation shipments declined by 3.3 percent in 1997. This is a sign that Windows NT is gradually overtaking Unix as a platform for the workstation, to the delight of Microsoft. Naturally, Microsoft is pushing Windows NT aggressively to workstation vendors and the company

expects that many corporate users will shift from their Windows 95 installations, straight to Windows 98—without using the upcoming Windows 98 in between. This is all good news for vendors who have a strong foothold in the Windows NT market, such as HP, who shipped 222,394 Windows NT units in 1997.

Having said this, Hewlett-Packard still intends to push the Unix platform, because the reality of the market dictates this, especially in the high-end professional graphics market.

Intel helps PC assemblers serve users

INTEL HAS launched the Intel Product Integrator Programme (IPI), which aims to assist PC assemblers put together systems. The program offers full information on product enhancements, sales information, marketing, technical advice and more.

The idea is to deliver a somewhat unified quality of PC systems, with Intel processors at

their heart. The program has a strong sales element, by promoting better marketing of Intel-based products. Vendors joining the program will receive support through a 'protected' IPI Web site, which can be accessed with a password.

The service is called IPI Net, and provides on-line, updated information. Telephone support is also available.

For more information, contact Intel's regional office in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, at telephone 00 971 4 516800.

News update

Pentium II to hit 450MHz this year

Intel plans to develop the Pentium II throughout 1998, reaching a peak speed of 450MHz by year's end.

There is much anticipation in the computer industry, as Intel prepares its Merced 64 processor, for release next year.

It should replace 32-bit processors in the massive processing markets, but the standard will continue to rule the desktop.

These announcements and following speculations are emerging as Intel introduced its 333MHz processor technology, which is yet to make it to desktop PCs.

Windows 98 to be launched in July
Microsoft has recently

announced the official launch of Microsoft Windows 98, its latest operating system. The date is 25 July, 1998, and it is expected that there will be no delays.

This comes from Microsoft amid speculation regarding the problems the company is having

with the US Justice Department. The US Government filed an anti-trust suit against Microsoft charging it with 'monopolistic practices'.

At the heart of suit is the intention of Microsoft to include Internet Explorer features as standard in the upcoming operating system, therefore locking out competitors like Netscape.

As this case has still not been resolved, Microsoft

plans to introduce Windows 98 without Internet Explorer features, so as to comply with the current court order.

Leo DesignNote 6000
First International Computer introduced a new line of its DesignNote notebook range, called the 6000.

It is an ultra-slim Pentium MMX notebook, which packs more power and surprises than expected.

It offers a 13.3 inch color DSTN or TFT SVGA display, and has a removable 20X CD-ROM. RAM is expandable up to 80MB.

Weighing a mere 2.4 kilograms, and sporting a slim 38.5 millimeter profile, the DesignNote is smart and light.

The DesignNote 6000 comes with Leo's International Travellers Warranty.

For more information on Leo computers in Jordan, contact Al Raed Al Arabi Computer Corp. (RACC) at telephone 664343 or 688553.

INTERFACE

BY ZEID NASSER

Amnesty Programs: For pirates or for users?

AMIDST THEIR inability to battle software piracy, software publishers are adopting a new approach: amnesty programs.

Software producers are making announcements that any illegal users of software have the option to 'trade-in' their unoriginal software disks for an original package. In other words, software producers are trying to create incentives aimed at converting illegal users into licensed ones!

Some software companies provide discounts for these trades-ins, while others simply offer 'amnesty'—meaning forgiveness—and welcome the repentant users as new clients.

Companies like Informix, the large relational database management software, and Computer Associates, one of the largest software companies in the world, have both introduced amnesty programs. These programs were applied in a number of Gulf States at the beginning of the year. As to the effectiveness of these amnesty campaigns, they have had limited results. The reason seems obvious when you consider their campaign slogan: 'Amnesty for all you pirates'!

Amnesty programs only work with users who have tried to make savings by copying a piece of software, only to find out that they would be better off purchasing an original copy in order to benefit from the technical support. Clearly, these users can't base important business functions on pirated software, yet once they discover that fact, they may still need some encouragement to 'go legal'.

This is the actual philosophy behind the so-called amnesty programs, which could have had more gentle slogans like 'Trade in your copied software for an original'.

A milder slogan would encourage more users to come forward because, as the slogan currently reads—'Amnesty for Pirates'—coming forward would only be an admission that you are a thief! Now who would like to admit to something like that?

On a more reasonable level it's clear that these users are not pirates, they are just users of illegally obtained software. Pirates are those who trade in copied software, making easy money for themselves by stealing the efforts of hard-working software developers and publishers.

However, it is important to note that illegal software users are breaking the law, although it has become a commonly accepted fact that they are 'lesser' offenders than the pirates. Most campaigns to battle piracy usually include pirate arrests, but seldom extends to illegal users.

Anyway, back to the amnesty programs in the region. Companies like Informix have much to gain from winning over a user, rather than prosecuting him/her.

Look at it this way. If Informix were to seek legal action against an illegal user, the company would incur all sorts of legal costs. Also, it will have lost out on the chance of adding a potential client. So, Informix loss would be two-fold. Hence, the amnesty programs achieve two goals in one.

In the Middle East, such ideas are a welcome change to the threatening tone adopted by software companies, which have not been substantiated by authority actions! Although a number of closures of pirate software shops have taken place in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, it is safe to say that over 90 percent of software in use in the region is pirated!

Maybe it's time for other, more creative tactics, that heat the pirates at their own game, by providing something more appealing to regular users.

With Tomorrowland, Disneyland bets that the future is now

By Daryl Strickland

ANAHEIM, California—The towering Astro Orbiter ride, its rockets circling planets and other celestial bodies, commands the center of attention in the newly refurbished Tomorrowland at Disneyland officially opens in May—just in time for the peak summer season.

But Tomorrowland is more than reworked rides and attractions. It is Walt Disney Company's own \$100-million-plus bet on the immediate future of its original theme park.

For the next three years, Disneyland's hopes for luring more patrons hinge on the Tomorrowland face lift—which has become the park's largest and costliest project. It will be Disneyland's only major new attraction until its \$1.4-billion California Adventure, a separate theme park, opens next

door in 2001.

Competitors, meantime, won't be letting up. The industry is expected to spend record amounts this year as amusement parks try to come up with the monster ride that will out-thrill all the others and attract the tourist bucks.

In Southern California, the most competitive turf of all, Six Flags Magic Mountain will soon open what it calls the world's tallest and fastest stand-up roller coaster. Over the next year, Knott's Berry Farm will launch more new rides and shows than ever before, including the state's largest wooden roller coaster. Universal Studios is adding a movie-themed attraction this summer. Another major attraction, the \$117-million Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific, opens in June.

"As people have more choices, the chances they will do a repeat visit grows less and less," said

Tim O'Brien, an Amusement Business magazine writer who has written several books on the theme park industry. "But if you can offer something different, then that's where you bring people back."

For Disneyland, the revitalized Tomorrowland is the "key marketing message for 1998 and beyond," park spokesman Tom Brocato said. "We anticipate it will be a very big draw."

While no one doubts the new Tomorrowland will be a good draw, the question is whether it will be the huge magnet Disneyland hopes for.

The park has had smaller-scale disappointments. Last fall, for instance, the heavily promoted but much-maligned Light Magic parade went on "hiatus" for two years for retooling after the park spent \$20 million on the show.



Refurbished Tomorrowland at Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., opens May 22, 1998. It is the park's only major new attraction until \$1.4 billion California Adventure opens in 2001. photo by Al Schaben.

ica's most popular park, Disneyland, which opened in 1955, saw its lead in attendance overtaken through much of the 1990s by Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. Disneyland reassessed itself as top gun for two years when the Indiana Jones Adventure ride sent attendance soaring 40 percent in 1995. But attendance slipped 5 percent last year, and the park fell a notch in the rankings.

Built as one of the original sections of the park, Tomorrowland was last remodeled in the late 1960s, though a few attractions have been added since. Improvements were considered long overdue.

"The future is always the hardest themed approach to deal with because they're old before they're done," said Dennis Spiegel, an industry consultant based in Ohio.

Inspired by futurists like science fiction novelist Jules Verne, Disneyland executives envisioned Tomorrowland as a shrine to idealism.

The job of rejuvenating the area fell to a group headed by Tony Baxter, senior vice president of creative development at Walt Disney Imagineering, the subsidiary that develops new projects.

Baxter wanted visitors to feel the rush he got in seeing the latest, cutting-edge gizmos at the annual Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. So within Tomorrowland, he created attractions that will try to keep pace with innovation.

Visitors will see, for instance, how emerging technology will be incorporated into their lives at

Innovations, an exhibit based on an Epcot Center model at Walt Disney World.

Featuring soon-to-be-released consumer products, provided by the exhibit's corporate sponsors, the displays will change every six months or less to attract repeat visitors. Had it been open three years ago, for example, Innovations would have showcased a display showing the advantages of Microsoft's Windows 95 software.

"I'd like people to have the first look at things ... that better their work and play environments," Baxter said. More importantly, he hopes patrons will be drawn back by the ever-changing exhibits.

Tomorrowland's opening bolsters hopes that tourist numbers will be stronger throughout Southern California this year.

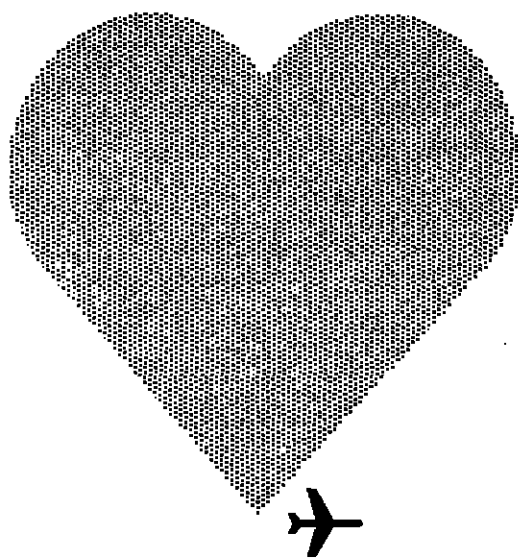
Disneyland promotions will be splashed across the United States, Mexico, Canada and Europe, helping to boost tourism in general throughout Southern California.

The Anaheim Marriott, a major base for Disneyland visitors, will increase its front desk staff by as much as 10 percent this summer to handle what it expects will be larger crowds pulled in by the new renovation, said Jon Lockwood, the hotel's director of sales.

"We look at the opening of Tomorrowland as being on par, if not stronger, than when the Indiana Jones ride opened," he said.

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